This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

SERMONS

EXPLANATORY OF I COR. XV.

BY

THE REV. THOMAS AINGER.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

OF

ST. PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS,

EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED

IN A

SERIES OF SERMONS,

PREACHED BY THE

REV. THOMAS AINGER, M.A.
PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S,
AND INCUMBENT OF HAMPSTEAD.

Second Edition.

LONDON:
RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE.
1860.

100. z. 4.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

PREFACE.

Of the following series of Sermons, explanatory of the 15th chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, five were preached during Lent, and the sixth upon Easter Day, 1860.

In compliance with the wish of the congregation who heard them, they are now printed, almost in the form in which they were originally written; though the writer has gratefully availed himself of the valuable suggestions of two judicious friends, who were good enough to examine the manuscripts.

The fact that the larger portion of this wonderful chapter is introduced into the Burial Service of the Church of England, secures for it a hearing by many, who are not regular students of the

Holy Scriptures; and at a time, too, when their hearts are open to solemn and tender impressions, and the question is forced upon the attention of each—What will become of *me* when I die? Of what incalculable value would it be, if this inquiry and the thoughts connected with it could, under God's blessing, be improved into something better than a mere passing emotion!

THOMAS AINGER.

Parsonage, Hampstead,
August, 1860.

ANY profits which may arise from the sale of this volume, will be added to the fund for the erection of a new Girls' School in the Parish Church District of Hampstead.

SERMON I.

1 Corinthians xv. 19.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

I propose this day to commence a series of Sermons upon the 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which, with God's permission, will occupy our meditations during the greater number of the Sunday Mornings in the present Lent. Such a series has many advantages in it. The Sermons will form something like a complete whole; for this chapter of the Epistle stands, as it were, isolated and separate from the rest of the chapters. The Apostle has, in the 14th, just concluded his expostulations and instructions regarding the abuse of the gift of tongues; and the 16th, which follows, is filled with directions for the collection of alms in aid of the suffering

Christians at Jerusalem, with notices of his own plans for the future, with affectionate remembrances from his colleagues, and benedictions from himself. So that this treatise on the resurrection does not require much preliminary explanation or introduction. The truth is, there is no notice in the Epistle of the circumstances which called forth this elaborate and invaluable essay. Possible causes for it may be inferred from what we know of the general condition and the prevalent heresies of the Church at that early period. But there is nothing in the Epistle itself which will authorize us to speak with certainty as to the immediate causes which led to the abrupt introduction of so powerful and detailed a notice. As to the subject itself, it is one which excites not merely our natural curiosity, but our deepest feelings and our liveliest hopes. It answers, as fully as in this imperfect state the question can be answered, what shall become of each one of us when our probation upon earth is concluded. It opens some of the mysteries of the grave, and of the life to come. Who would not fain penetrate into the secrets of that unknown state of being, when the body shall rest in its kindred earth, and the spirit return to the God who gave it? And who does not confess *the limited* powers of man's apprehension, and

the impossibility of realizing the particulars of a state of being, of which no man's personal experience can inform us; seeing that none has returned from the grave to reveal what God has been pleased to hide from us? For aught we know, the planets and the innumerable stars of heaven may be the dwelling-place of living and thinking beings; but whilst we cast our wondering gaze upon them, who can conceive any thing of the nature, and power, and characteristics of their inhabitants? And if such be the case in the *visible* firmament of heaven, who can conceive any thing of that *invisible* world of the dead, towards which we are all hastening? What inspiration teaches, we thankfully and humbly accept; and God be praised, who, while He forbids all vain and unpractical speculations, has vouchsafed much that is solid and reasonable and comforting, in the truths revealed to us, under the direct inspiration of His Holy Spirit, by so gifted and wise a guide as St. Paul.

Whatever knowledge of immortality might have been granted to our first parents before or even after the fall, it is clear that their posterity soon corrupted their ways, and crippled their understandings; so that the early covenants were made to hinge mainly upon temporal conditions. Doubtless the more spiritually minded among

them looked for something beyond mere transitory promises. There were promptings within their hearts which yearned after the imperishable. There were unsatisfied longings which dreamed of a life beyond the present, and of a higher state of existence. And consequently, among the heathen, every pretender to inspiration, every fabricator of a new form of religion, was most liberal in trying to satisfy this curiosity. It required little beyond fertility of invention, and a lively fancy, to furnish descriptions of things which could never be brought to the test of actual investigation; and consequently the wildest notions about rewards and punishments have been rife among almost all races of mankind. A sound and educated understanding could hardly fail to reject such follies and corruptions as these proved to be; and so the mythologies of heathendom disappeared before the light of science and the progress of right moral feeling. But the longing for this sort of knowledge remained; and to what might man have recourse, to satisfy this longing? There was little beyond vague conjectures and probabilities, until life and immortality were brought to light by Jesus Christ. But in the Christian doctrine of immortality, much more was involved than the bare assertion *that the soul of* man survived the body, and was

capable of pleasure and pain after the dissolution of his material part. Arguments derived from the very conditions of this mortal life, from the unequal distribution of worldly advantages, from the presumed character and justice of the Supreme Governor, and from the inward desires which seemed an absolute instinct, feeling after a world to come, and feeding itself with anticipations of retribution, and of accessions of knowledge, and of nearer approaches to the ultimate source of perfection;—these arguments, and the like, had bred a strong persuasion in the minds of thoughtful moralists, that verily man's *all* could not terminate here, and that there must be a continuation of *being* and of blessing in reserve, beyond the dark valley of the shadow of death. But when weak human intellect would advance beyond these reasonable surmises, it needs a strong arm to lean upon, and a sufficient light to guide it. And who, but God manifest in the flesh, can uplift the cloud which rests upon these mysteries, and give us light and vigour to go forward? No one can read this 15th chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians without confessing that a master-spirit, strong in the power and illumination of the Holy Ghost, is speaking here. That in these wonderful declarations there are many things hard to be understood, cannot be denied.

There may be references to prevalent opinions, or circumstances notorious at the time, but now remembered no longer, which have added obscurity to certain passages; as when the Apostle speaks of those who are baptized for the dead, or of his own battle with the beasts at Ephesus. These and others will come before us in their order, and the best interpretation, which a careful examination of the judgment of learned commentators can furnish, shall be brought before you. But how much need is there, that you, and I, and all of us, should pray for the guidance of that Spirit which searcheth the deep things of God, so that, whether it may please Him or not to direct us into all truth, we may at least be protected from all dangerous error in the things which concern our everlasting welfare.

The greater part of this chapter must have been heard by most of us in one of the most solemn and comforting ordinances of the Church, the Office for the Burial of the Dead. For my own part—and I believe I may speak for my brethren in the ministry as well as myself—familiarity with it in no degree lessens the deep interest with which we read it. No doubt there is in all the circumstances associated with this Office much to awaken solemn thought and Christian sympathies. But it is not this alone which

speaks to our inmost souls, rousing the flagging attention, and associating a certain freshness with its most frequent repetition. It seems continually opening to us, farther and farther, visions into the infinite, affording nobler conceptions of our destiny, and acquainting us with the majesty of things unknown and inconceivable by human faculties. I do not hesitate to say, that, had we nothing else to mark St. Paul's transcendent powers, nothing else to testify the indwelling of God's Spirit within him, this chapter alone would suffice to evince his immeasurable superiority to all merely human guessers after truth, who darken counsel by words without knowledge.

I said that we do not know the precise cause which led St. Paul to compose this disquisition upon the resurrection of the body. That in the earliest ages unsound doctrines upon this point prevailed among the professed believers in Jesus Christ, as well as among His philosophizing opponents, is too evident to be questioned. When the Apostle preached at Athens upon this subject, we know that some mocked, and others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter." One of the earliest heretics (Marcion) is said to have termed the resurrection of the body, "the doctrine of worms." It opposed all their prejudices, and contradicted the refinements of most of the

heathen teachers, who regarded the body only as a clog to the spirit, a festering and loathsome mass, weighing it down, and hindering its aspirations. And so they amused themselves with suggestions about a spiritual resurrection, altogether separate from, and independent of, any thing material. Probably of this school were Hymenæus and Philetus, mentioned by St. Paul in his second chapter of the Second Epistle Timothy, at the 16th verse. "Shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness; and their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." Degraded notions of the body being generally entertained, we are not surprised that St. Paul was reckoned by the Athenians to be "a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection." It seemed to them a thing impossible, that God should raise the dead. They could talk learnedly of the dispersion of those elements whereof man's body is framed, and the utter loss of all identity of person which such dispersion must occasion. Little as they knew about chemistry, they could yet trace some of the elements of the human frame after their separa-

tion; and then, forming a feeble estimate of the illimitable influences of the Deity from their own very limited powers, they thought they had put an end to all farther reasoning upon the subject, by boldly saying, that such things *could* not be. Had their chemistry been more extensive, they might have known what all our researches teach us, that nothing in this world is utterly lost and annihilated. Matter may indeed appear in new forms, and in such multifarious disguises, that our acutest observation may not be able to detect it as the same, under its transmuted aspect; but there is not one ounce less of matter in this globe—nay, I speak it humbly, but faithfully, not in the vast framework of the universe, than there was at that primary era, when the everlasting Creator called it into existence, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. So that the assertion grounded upon a supposed impossibility betrays only our own shallowness, and the vanity of attempting to measure by human standards the powers of Him who is higher than heaven, and deeper than hell.

When creation was completed, God pronounced all His works, and specially man himself, the chiefest of those works, to be very good. It was not upon man's spiritual part alone, but upon the

body also, with which that spirit was allied, that the sentence of the divine approval was passed. Both were at first perfect, both fell together. Would not analogy then encourage the hope that both shall be restored? If one could be ransomed, why not *both?* "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," is our Lord's declaration. Is this nothing more than a mere metaphorical way of saying that we are altogether under the protecting providence of God? I am inclined to attach to it a deeper meaning than that. What are the Psalmist's words? "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book were all my members written, which day by day were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." And is all this watchful care expended upon that which is naught, yea worse than naught, low and offensive, the instrument of evil, the source of pain? Surely God had something far higher than this in view, when He "created man *in his own* image—*in the image of God* created he him." Does any one deem this to be too material a way of looking at the subject? I am afraid of poetical and allegorical interpretations of God's Word. For the most part he who holds to the letter is the safest. To speak contemptuously of the body is to despise one of God's greatest marvels. And farther still, how strangely is it associated with the living and

thinking principle within! We may please ourselves with notions of disembodied agents. There may be such. We are taught that God's angels are employed by Him in "ministering unto them who shall be heirs of salvation." But are they disembodied? there seem no grounds for any such positive persuasion. On the other hand, of the direct blessings which man may convey to man by the means of his material organs, we can indeed feel the value. And shall not the hand which soothes our sufferings and relieves our wants, shall not the lips which speak encouragement and acquaint us with godly truth, shall not the foot which carries the glad tidings of salvation to the ends of the earth, shall not every member and organ which is exercised in the labours of holiness and love, have their part in that revival, which shall re-clothe the faithful servant in a body meet for immortality? Be sure that those are not the most spiritually minded, who can speak lightly or irreverently of any part of God's material creation. Whatever may have been the precise opinions or practices which St. Paul intended to condemn when in writing to the Colossians he spoke of a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and *neglecting of the body*, we may at least infer from his language that he entertained no sympathy with men who placed their religion in contemplation

rather than in action. There are some Eastern devotees who think that by degrading and crippling their bodies they are exalting themselves in the favour of Heaven, and that, though personally useless, disgusting, and vicious, they are carrying out the prime objects of their creation. Such notions may be characteristic of a state of gross idolatry; but to Christian men our Apostle prescribes another and a purer rule. "Yield not ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

The earlier part of this 15th chapter, in like manner, bears strongly upon the dignity of the human body, by insisting upon the fact, that our Lord Jesus Christ assumed a human body as well as a human soul, and that with that human body He arose from the grave. He took not upon Him "the nature of angels," but the nature of humanity; "he was made in all things like unto his brethren," that so He might rightly represent them—that as Adam was the federal head of a fallen race, so should Jesus Christ be the federal head of a redeemed creation. The original condemnation pronounced upon Adam descended to his latest posterity; in Adam *all* die, alike lost and

degraded in body as in soul. In Christ shall *all* be made alive; the restoration effected in and by Him extends to all who will embrace the gracious privilege procured through His sacrifice and mediation; and the certainty that they shall rise from the dead with their own bodies to give account before His judgment seat, is involved in the fact that He arose again on the third day in that selfsame body in which He had suffered upon the Cross.

With the view of establishing these vital truths the Apostle abruptly commences this chapter by the assertion, that Christ's resurrection had been the main point of all his teaching, the cardinal fact which gave consistency and certainty to the whole system. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this

present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." We have here the first eight verses of the chapter; and in them is contained an abstract of the evidence upon which the certainty of Christ's resurrection is established, namely, the unanimous consent of the twelve chosen witnesses, supported by the ocular demonstration afforded to more than five hundred disciples, of whom the larger proportion were still alive to testify their conviction, and finally confirmed by the unwilling assent of himself. Having thus briefly recapitulated the evidence by which the fact of Christ's resurrection is demonstrated, he turns aside from the main subject, to confess his own unworthiness of so special a privilege, as had been herein granted to him. Who was he, that to him should be revealed such high and saving mysteries? "I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am *what I am:*"—it was His special and undeserved mercy which bestowed upon me whatever qualifications I possess for this exalted trust to which I have been appointed. "And his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they

all: yet not *I*, but the grace of God which was with me." St. Paul enlarges no farther upon his own comparative success as an ambassador of Christ above his colleagues in the office. He seems hastily to check himself in dilating upon a question which might betray him into any unseemly expressions of self-congratulation and vainglory, and turns at once to *the* subject which alone could justify him in referring to the successes or the shortcomings of his fellow-labourers, namely, the unanimity of their teaching on this all-important doctrine of the resurrection of the dead—"therefore whether it were I or they, *so* we preach, and *so* ye believed." No matter from whom ye received the glad tidings of salvation: it might have been Paul or Apollos or Cephas who was employed as God's instrument for acquainting you with the Gospel of Christ; at any rate there was no variation in the tenour of that message; the resurrection of our Lord was the prime article of the faith which gave consistency and confirmation to all the rest. This assured you of the efficacy of His sacrifice for the sins of the world, this was the pledge of your own future exaltation. "So we preach, and so ye believed." Thus naturally and convincingly St. Paul brings us back again to his main topic; from which he had been diverted by a parenthetical confession, how little he had de-

served the distinction and prominence conferred upon him. From this point the course of his main argument appears to commence, and he states it with a clearness and fulness which mark his entire conviction. Starting from the fact of Christ's resurrection, established by the concurrent testimony of many witnesses, he goes on to show its bearing upon *our own future*, and the contradictions involved in any attempt to deny the plain inferences which follow from its confession. He reasons the case backwards and forwards; and demonstrates how the truth of God and the hopes of the Gospel are jeoparded by any doubts or denials here. "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." There is no blinking of the truth in this statement. Either the doctrine which you have been taught is true or false. If it be true that Christ is risen, then, to hold that truth and deny the possibility of a general resurrection of the dead, is a direct contradiction in terms. For if the dead cannot rise, then Christ is still dead, and all our unanimous testimony is a concerted and deliberate falsehood. And such a conspiracy to deceive the

world is no slight or venial delusion. It aims a mortal blow at all our belief and all our hopes. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Nay, worse than this, we are misrepresenting the very God of truth, whose messengers we assume to be. "We are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." With the resignation of this doctrine you abandon all that renders Christ's revelation suitable to a fallen race. The history of your redemption is a mere fable and a mockery. To talk of reconciliation through the value of a sacrifice of the acceptance of which we have no proof, is but an idle and unpractical pretence; and what proof can there be, if the resurrection be denied? You may deceive yourselves with unsubstantial hopes of pardon at the last, but take away this sure foundation, and what ground is left for any such hopes? Not only would you hereby forego all that renders your own condition endurable, as the disciples of a despised and crucified Master, but you rob yourselves of all those consolations which arise from a persuasion

that all those whom you have loved and lost are not lost for ever. "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." You have been taught and encouraged to believe that the souls of the saints departed are resting in peace from their earthly labours; even now joint members with yourselves of Christ's mystical body, not cut off from your sympathies, even while you yourselves survive; and to be hereafter restored to you in the realms of perfect happiness and glory. And must all this be yielded up, and denied, and forgotten? Shall the dead never live again to us? Are all our attachments to be resigned as terminated with the period of our sojourn upon earth? Have we feasted upon each other's society for a while, and learned to appreciate each opening virtue, and to watch each development of all that was lovely, and pure, and of good report, only to feel more acutely the utter blank occasioned by their removal? Has God made all men for nought? It is true that we have here no abiding city, and is it vain and delusory to seek for one hereafter? The moth and rust corrupt all earthly treasures, and is there no safer storehouse where our best treasures may be deposited? Well may the Apostle add, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." We have been cheated with high-sounding pro-

mises of blessing and peace while we sojourn here, and for these we have been content to forego much that to the carnal mind is attractive and enjoyable. We have been told of peace more perfect, and of infinitely fuller blessing reserved for "the children of God, being the children of the resurrection;" and for the sake of these we have been well content to endure hardness as Christ's soldiers: and must all be resigned, like as unsubstantial dreams when one awaketh? Assuredly, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. Blessed be God, there shall be in His good time a full accomplishment of all that He has promised. It is but a brief exercise of faith, and our hope shall be deferred no longer. And who may conceive, who may venture to speak of that rich and inexhaustible reserve of felicity which His bounty has provided? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." But it shall be revealed in that day "when the Lord maketh up his jewels."

SERMON II.

---

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 20—22.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

THE whole of St. Paul's argument is grounded upon the fact that our Redeemer was very *man*, as well as very God. Unless we admit the identity of *His* nature with our own, all that the Apostle infers amounts to nothing. The misbeliever asserts that there is no resurrection of the dead, or, at any rate, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ does not prove it. The Apostle's reply is this: If Jesus were of an entirely different nature from our nature, it would not necessarily follow, that what occurred in His case *must* likewise occur in ours. But He actually did

assume our nature. He was a man upon earth, just as much as we are men upon earth. True, He was infinitely more than this, but the question does not turn upon what He was more than man. He was truly a man, "of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting." If I can show, therefore, that He really died as a man, and really rose again from the dead as a man, it is idle for you to contend that a man cannot die and rise again; for here you have direct and indisputable demonstration to the contrary. Look to all the history that has been recorded of Him. He was born into the world as a man, of the substance of the Virgin Mary, His mother. He hungered and thirsted as a man, and was tempted, and suffered, and died as a man; and He rose on the third day as a man,—marked by the lineaments and form which enabled those best acquainted with Him to recognize His person; nay, He permitted Himself to be handled by them, that He might satisfy them that He was no unsubstantial spirit, but possessed of flesh and bones as He was before; He ate and drank in their presence, to mark the entireness of His bodily restoration; and after He had done all this and more, He rose from earth to take His seat, in the body, at His Father's right hand, and to mediate on behalf of those human brethren whom He had left behind, but for whom He had gone to prepare

a place, that in the end they might be with Him, where He *is*, to behold and to share His glory. Admitting these truths, it is an absurdity and a contradiction to say, that a *man* cannot rise again from the dead. To deny our own bodily resurrection, is virtually to deny His; and such a denial amounts to the abandonment of all our religious hopes, and sinks us very nearly, if not entirely, to a level with the beasts which perish. We have seen, then, why St. Paul insists so much upon our Lord's perfect humanity, and what momentous consequences follow from it. It is indispensable that you should retain this primary truth in mind, in order that you may in any measure attain to the right understanding of that which follows; and especially with respect to the assertion of the Son's eventual subjection to the Father.

After these preliminary remarks upon the general bearing of the Apostle's argument, I would bespeak your attention to a few particulars regarding certain Jewish festivals, which seem requisite in order to the right understanding of the allusions contained in this chapter. The offering of the firstfruits was an occasion of solemn rejoicing before the Lord, and we find mention of the ceremony in Holy Scripture. We have precise directions for its observance in the *Law, and in* the way of metaphor it is continually

introduced in the writings of the Old Testament as well as the New. St. Paul speaks of his *early* convert Epenetus, as the *firstfruits* of Achaia unto Christ: and here, in the chapter before us, he terms Jesus Christ the firstfruits of them that slept. Now, we are likely to lose a good deal of the force and beauty of this reference, unless we are aware of the exact circumstances of this feast, and the times of its observance. All of us, probably, have not remarked that there was an earlier and later offering of firstfruits every year. The later was far the more popular of the two. Then not only did the agricultural inhabitants of the remoter parts of Palestine assemble at the Holy City, with all the outward marks of pomp and rejoicing before the God who had blessed their labours with increase, but there was a great gathering of the Jews who were dwelling as colonists in other countries, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and Libya, the strangers of Rome, the Cretans, the Arabians, and the rest of whom St. Luke speaks in the second chapter of the Acts. This great celebration was generally known as the feast of weeks, or Pentecost. Of the three chief anniversaries of the Jews this was generally the most densely frequented, because, from the more advanced season of the year, the facilities for travelling were greater, and

the crowds who came up to it consequently outnumbered those who attended the celebration of the Passover. The time of its celebration was calculated according to the ordinance of Moses. In the 16th chapter of Deuteronomy, and at the ninth verse, we read, "Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou *beginnest* to put the sickle to the corn." This calculation will carry us back to the Passover feast, as the time when the harvest was reckoned to *begin*. The sickle was to be put into the corn, and the *green sheaf* gathered and presented in the Temple on the next day after the Passover sabbath. This *green* sheaf was in one sense the "firstfruits" of the harvest. But the harvest itself could not fully ripen and be ready for the sickle until seven weeks had elapsed; namely, at the feast of Pentecost. There was a third national festival, a sort of general harvest-home, celebrated afterwards, in the month Tizri, nearly corresponding with our September. With this feast of ingathering, after all the fruits of the earth had been duly garnered, the feast of Tabernacles, as it was termed in the Law, we are not here immediately concerned. But observe what results we obtain from the previous reckonings. The sabbath, which commenced immediately after our Lord's burial, is expressly stated

by St. John to have been "an high day." It was the Passover sabbath, and corresponding with our Easter Eve. Consequently the first day after *that* sabbath, the day upon which the green sheaf of the firstfruits was offered, is the highest of our Christian anniversaries, the day upon which we record our Lord's bodily resurrection from the grave. Does not this fact give a striking application and point to St. Paul's words, when he calls Christ *the firstfruits* of them that slept? As the natural harvest followed during the ensuing seven weeks after this preliminary festival, so shall the world-wide harvest of the general resurrection follow in its due season. Then shall God's ripe corn be gathered into His storehouse, and the rejoicing of the everlasting Pentecost be accomplished. So, if Easter Day speaks to us of Christ's resurrection, "the firstfruits of them that slept," the pledge of the ensuing harvest, Pentecost, or Whitsunday, speaks to us, not only of the descent of the Holy Ghost, which took place as on that day at Jerusalem, but also of that day when the dead in Christ shall rise from the dust,—ourselves, brethren, as we trust, among that blessed number, to enter into those heavenly mansions which He has prepared for us. These remarks may assist some of us to understand the Apostle's language better; but by way of farther illustration, I will

add the account which Calmet has furnished, from the scattered notices of Holy Scripture, as well as from the records of Jewish commentators, respecting the ceremonies observed at the offering of the "wave sheaf," as it was termed. "The day after the feast of the Passover, they brought into the temple a sheaf of corn, as the firstfruits of the barley harvest, with these ceremonies. On the 15th of Nisan in the evening, when the feast of the first day of the Passover was ended, and the second day was begun" (which was reckoned from sunset), and "which was a working day, the house of judgment deputed three men to go in solemnity and gather the sheaf of barley. The inhabitants of the neighbouring cities assembled to witness the ceremony. The barley was gathered in the territory of Jerusalem. The deputies demanded three times *if the sun were set?* They were as often answered, *It is.* Afterwards they demanded three times, if *they might have leave to cut the sheaf?* Leave was, as often, granted. They reaped it out of three different fields, with three different sickles, and put the ears into three boxes to carry them into the temple. The sheaf, or rather the three sheaves, being arrived at the temple, were threshed in the court, and they took a full omer, that is, about three pints of grain; after it had been well winnowed, parched, and

bruised, they sprinkled over it nearly a pint of oil, and to this they added a handful of incense. The priest who received the offering waved it before the Lord towards the four quarters of the world, crosswise; he cast part of it upon the altar, and the rest was his own. After this every one might begin his harvest." And now, recalling what I have already said respecting the true *human nature* of our Saviour, we may proceed, without further preface, to examine the next nine verses of this chapter, commencing at the 20th.

Were there a doubt as to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our brother by incarnation; and were there, by necessary consequence, a doubt as to our resurrection also, we Christians should be the most unhappy of God's creatures, condemned to a life of self-denial and suffering here, and defrauded of our hope of joy, and peace, and recompense hereafter. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." We know that when treaties or compacts are made between nation and nation, there must be some plenipotentiary to represent either party. The conditions are binding upon all the individuals represented, but each one does not give his own

individual pledge and assent. One undertakes for all, and all are compromised by that undertaking. The compact may be beneficial, or the contrary; but all become subject to its conditions, whether those conditions admit to certain privileges, or entail certain penalties. The dealings between God and His human creation are regulated by a similar system. In the first instance, God entered into covenant with all mankind in Adam, their great progenitor. By one condition was Adam restrained; he disobeyed; and the condemnation attached to disobedience fell, not upon the individual Adam only, but upon all who were represented in Adam. When the merciful Creator, who had vouchsafed the first covenant of obedience so forfeited by deliberate rebellion, was pleased once more to enter into treaty with His creatures, it was indispensable that they should be represented as entirely as they had been before represented in Adam. Whatever other qualifications might be needed to furnish such a plenipotentiary, it was obviously needful that he should be *a man*, in order fully to represent the human race. "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

There is a peculiarity in the verbal construction

of the passage of the Epistle to the Corinthians, which it is not easy to render closely in our own language, but which certainly marks that the names of Adam and Christ do not simply indicate *individual persons*, as they do in other parts of Scripture. In this 22nd verse, there is *an article* prefixed to the names[1]. As in *the* Adam, the federal head of mankind at their creation, *all* die: even so in *the* Christ, the federal head of their new creation, shall *all* be made alive. In his Epistle to the Romans our Apostle carries out the same position yet more fully and elaborately. In the fifth chapter he terms the first Adam the *figure* of Him that was to come, and adds, "If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by *one man*, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." As the penalty, death, was universally inflicted, so the resurrection from the dead shall be universal also.

"But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits: afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." The interval which elapsed be-

[1] V. 20. Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν. 22. Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ . . . . οὕτω ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ.

tween the offering of the wave sheaf (when the sickle was *first* put into the corn), and the period of the full ingathering of the harvest, may be taken to represent the interval between Christ's resurrection, and that general resurrection which shall take place at the end of the world. The one gives assurance of the other, but they are very far from being simultaneous. These facts alone, as it would seem, is the Apostle inspired to reveal. He does not answer all the curious questions which we may be disposed to suggest. He says nothing about a first and a second resurrection here. From other parts of Scripture we may infer that there will be some such distinction; and some may be led to suppose that there will be a visible reign of Christ over His elect, during this mysterious interval. About these particulars the Apostle here tells us nothing. The three points which he establishes are, Christ's bodily restoration first, and next, the bodily restoration of all those whom Christ represents, as their Federal Head, when He shall be revealed in His glory, and *then* cometh the end. In all this be it remembered that He is still the Son of man. As in His human nature He died, and rose again, and ascended, and even now is mediating at the right hand of God, even so in His human nature shall He return to judge

the quick and the dead; for it is expressly said, that unto Him the "Father hath committed all judgment, *because* he is *the Son of man.*" But when this great assize is past, and the final sentence of acceptance or rejection has been pronounced, what place or occasion shall there be any longer for the kingdom of a Mediator? That special authority which He exercised over His redeemed, as their Advocate, shall be absorbed in His universal empire, as one with the Father; and the very Son of man shall be manifested in His essential glory, as the very Son of God. Human thought and human language can but vaguely shadow forth the inscrutable truth asserted by St. Paul in the verses which follow, and ill would it become us to scan it too closely, or to dogmatize about it. Thus much only may we venture to assert upon the Apostle's inspired authority, that, when the resurrection and the judgment are past, "then cometh the end!" God's vast counsels regarding man shall then have been consummated; imperfection, sin, and death, shall then be finally abolished! There shall remain no more sorrow which requires to be relieved and comforted, for "God shall have wiped off all tears from all faces;" there shall be no more ignorance which requires to be instructed, for "then shall we know, even as we

are known." Faith and hope shall be perfected in actual possession and enjoyment; and love, that highest grace of which man is capable here below, shall alone survive, as the very atmosphere of God's immediate presence, the everlasting bond which shall unite together the glorified inhabitants of heaven. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." The word which the Apostle here uses, when he speaks of Christ putting down all rule and all authority and power, is of rather frequent occurrence in the New Testament. In the Second Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul employs the same word in that familiar passage, "he hath *abolished* death." It implies the entire and eternal extermination of all those adversaries which are opposed to the perfect establishment of His king-

dom—the burden of ordinances, the curse of the law, the slavery of sin and corruption, and the power of the devil. All these has He vanquished, and "made a show of them, openly nailing them to his cross," and triumphing over them in it. This conquest had been foretold from the beginning. It was that final bruising of the serpent's head, which the seed of the woman was destined to inflict. To attest this, St. Paul quotes two passages from the book of Psalms. The first is found in the 110th Psalm, at the first verse: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The second reference is to the sixth verse of the eighth Psalm: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Both these prophecies assert the universality of Christ's kingdom, but there is something peculiar in the language of the first. It would seem to assign a limit to the duration of the kingdom in respect of time, though no limit in respect of extent. "Sit thou on my right hand, *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool." All things shall be put under His feet, but yet a crisis shall come when this peculiar and exclusive authority shall terminate. And are we not herein taught to believe that when the whole scheme for which the Son of

God was incarnate shall have been fulfilled, He shall resign into His Father's hands the office which He was pleased to undertake on behalf of us men, and for the special purpose of our salvation? Having redeemed us from death, and reconciled us to His Father, and invested us with His own purity and perfection, He shall present us before the throne of the Eternal, the recognized heirs of a heavenly kingdom, the accepted "children of God, being the children of the resurrection." It is no lowering of the attributes of our heavenly Master to say, that He shall so enrich us with the fulness of His glory, so secure us against the power of every adversary (for all shall then be trodden down and extinct), so establish us in His Father's favour, beyond the possibility of falling, that, the constant protection which we required before being no longer needed, He shall cease to extend it to us, and we shall be made "kings and priests unto God and his Father;" and He shall sit down upon His Father's throne, and God shall be all in all. My brethren, it is so difficult, in attempting any comment upon these high and mysterious words, to steer clear of all unguarded and irreverent language, that were not the passage thus forced upon our consideration, and were not any indirect mode of dealing with it liable to suspicion (as if

we were afraid of noticing it, and deemed it irreconcileable with the doctrine of Christ's eternal Godhead), I should by my own choice have hesitated, before I undertook a task so responsible, and so far beyond my grasp. I can but trust that God's good Spirit has in such measure guided my thoughts and expressions, that I have neither tampered with truth, nor yet lowered in any degree the unspeakable majesty of Him who is very God as well as very man, "equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood; who although He be God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ." And surely, brethren, that revelation which we have been studying, of the destiny awaiting ourselves, ought to awaken within us lofty aspirations after all that is pure and holy and enduring. When from this scene of weakness and sorrow and division, we look forward to the eternity when sin and death shall be abolished, and the Redeemer's glorious work shall be finished, and our crown shall be won, what has earth to offer which can attach us to its vanities, and withdraw our thoughts and hearts from the hopes of the life to come? "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him

as he is." Translated into His image, we shall be able more fully to conceive of His unspeakable perfections, and cleansed in His blood from all stain of sin, we shall appreciate more truly what we owe to Him, who once redeemed us, and who being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him; and through Him, no dominion over us. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God"—yea, liveth *as God;* for "by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist: and he is the head of the body the Church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Now, to the holy and undivided Trinity, the God who is all in all, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all glory and dominion for ever and ever.

SERMON III.

---

1 Corinthians xv. 29.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

We cannot have forgotten that the chief object of St. Paul in this chapter has been, to establish the certainty of the resurrection of the dead. It is true that in the last few verses which we examined, he digressed somewhat from this doctrine, to speak of that final consummation of the Mediator's kingdom, when God shall be all in all. But in the verse just read as my text, he returns (somewhat abruptly indeed, as was his characteristic mode of writing) to this all-important truth; and the very term with which he commences this sentence, distinctly marks its direct connexion with the previous argument; "*Else* what shall they do which are baptized for the

dead, if the dead rise not at all?" It is clear, then, that no interpretation of this verse can be correct which does not bear upon the main topic under discussion. St. Paul was no mean logician, and was not likely to introduce irrelevant matter into so grave an inquiry as this, or to lessen the effect of his previous reasoning by unapt and discursive questions. Whether we are guided by God's good Spirit to affix a right meaning to the words, or not, at any rate we have solid ground for concluding, that any interpretation which does not bear upon the Apostle's previous argument, and does not confirm the truth of a bodily resurrection, can hardly be admissible. To fancy otherwise would be little less than a reflection upon the inspired writer himself, as if he were weakly frittering down the force of his own assertions, and prolonging his dissertation after he had exhausted all his materials. Now it may be known to many of you, that there is not any single verse in the sacred Scriptures which has been the subject of so many commentaries and (so called) explanations as this. Did the extent of my reading enable me to bring them all before you (which is very far indeed from being the fact), I should do little else than weary your patience, and perplex your judgment. One critic has asserted that the mere enumeration of them

would fill a volume, without entering into any argument about each separately. By far the greater proportion of them might be dismissed at once, by the simple consideration to which I just now referred, that they do not really bear upon the Apostle's reasoning, or in any degree strengthen his chief position. I will quote one or two in proof of this. It seems that there existed, at the latter end of the second century, a certain heretical sect called, from their founder's name, the Marcionites. Among other strange opinions held by them, they supposed that the dead who had departed out of this life without receiving the sacrament of Baptism might be benefited by the substitution of living proxies, who should be baptized *for* them. Now we have no ground for believing that so foolish a notion had ever been heard of in St. Paul's time; but even supposing that it *had* been, and that Marcion in his own time only revived an exploded absurdity of a much earlier date, can we conceive it possible that the Apostle would have seriously alluded to it on such an occasion as this? And further, in what degree would it have strengthened his argument? Another interpretation, hardly less wild and irrelevant, was this. In early times the burying-places of the martyrs and confessors were frequently resorted to for the purpose of

Christian worship. We have proof that such was the case in the monumental remains found at this day in the catacombs of Rome. That in these secret and subterraneous retreats Christians were wont, in the period of persecution, to receive the sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, is too evident to be disputed; and the converts who sought these hiding-places for the purpose of being formally admitted into the fold of Christ, might be literally said to be baptized upon or above the dead, as the words of the original Greek might be correctly translated. But could this have been the case when St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians? Do we find in his writings, or in those of his contemporaries, any reference to the existence of such cemeteries? And again, even had such a practice been recognized, and of frequent occurrence, in what degree would the fact of baptism being celebrated over a martyr's grave have illustrated or confirmed the doctrine of a bodily resurrection? Surely such unsupported conjectures as these, and so irrelevant to the point at issue, may be passed over at once without farther comment. In bespeaking your attentive thoughts to one interpretation (not altogether unsupported by ancient authority [1]), I am

[1] See the 18th Canon of the Council of Carthage, together with the commentary of Theodorus Balsamon. A.D. 1180.

far from claiming your assent to it as indisputable. Probably to the end of time, the passage will continue unexplained to the satisfaction of all readers, and be classed among those hard sayings of the Apostle which are to be accepted meekly, not rashly investigated, and which experimentally prove man's incapacity to fathom the depths of revealed wisdom. Whether, however, the explanation I propose be right or wrong, at any rate it is not irreconcileable with the general teaching of Holy Scripture, and not out of place as an auxiliary argument for the certainty of a resurrection from the dead. Let me first recall to your recollection one or two familiar passages of Holy Scripture. In the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, at the third and fourth verses, these remarkable words occur: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." There is another quotation in the Epistle to the Colossians, where the Apostle speaks of baptism under the same metaphor of a death and a resurrection. "Buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of

the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (ii. 12.) There are numberless other quotations, in which a reference to Christ's death and resurrection is more or less directly introduced, to symbolize and represent the change of our spiritual condition with relation to our heavenly Father, which is effected by our being brought into covenant with Him. Nay, the very sign and form used in the administration of the sacrament of Baptism was an outward and visible illustration of the same idea. The body of the person baptized was immersed in the water, or sprinkled with it, to represent a burial, and then lifted up out of the water, to represent a resurrection. Baptism, then, is a spiritual death and a spiritual resurrection. The sacrament of our admission into Christ's Church involves a death and a resurrection;—a death unto sin, and a new birth or a resurrection unto righteousness. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, the metaphor derived from that doctrine is unmeaning and inapplicable. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why *then* are they baptized for the dead? Under such a supposition the Lord's appointed form of initiation is defective. It may mark the disciple as dead unto sin, but what pledge does it give of a new life unto righteousness? The old man

may be crucified with Christ, but where is the new man, created after the likeness of Him that redeemed us? The outward rite appointed for the administration of baptism is a cogent argument for the truth of Christ's resurrection, and, by consequence, for the certainty of the resurrection of all Christ's disciples. For the great lessons and the great consolations derived from baptism would be all lost if we, being "buried with Christ by baptism unto death," were not also "risen with him *therein*, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Surely this interpretation does give a force and coherence to St. Paul's words, and explains why he thus abruptly introduces a reference to baptism, an ordinance apparently but little connected with the subject of his entire discussion, but which, taken in conjunction with what he has written elsewhere, certainly does elucidate the obscure passage before us.

To recapitulate and to condense our previous statements, the argument amounts to *this;* Baptism symbolizes a burial to sin and a rising again to righteousness, and it derives its main efficacy and its aptitude of meaning from the facts of Christ's burial and resurrection. Now if Christ was buried, but did not rise again, the correspondence is incomplete; our death to sin, and our

bodily immersion in the waters of baptism, answer to *His* death; but there would be no counterpart in respect to our emerging from the laver of regeneration, if *He* were still holden of the grave. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." These considerations give a fuller meaning to those expressions employed by our Church in the thanksgiving after Baptism: "We beseech Thee to grant that this child, being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in His death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that as he is made partaker of the death of Thy Son, he may also be partaker of His resurrection;

so that finally, with the residue of Thy holy Church, he may be an inheritor of Thine everlasting kingdom; through Christ our Lord." Exactly to the same purpose is the petition contained in the Collect for Easter Even[2], and all combine in giving a logical as well as a very solemn meaning to these words of St. Paul; "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" What profit is there in the sacrament, so robbed of all its credentials and all its peculiar hopes? "*And*," adds the Apostle, as a final appeal in attestation of his own personal confidence in the resurrection of the dead, "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" This is not so much a fresh argument, as a closer application of the assertion which he had already made in the beginning of the chapter; "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." This was generally true of all the members of the Christian Church in those days, but it was yet more emphatically true of those who held a prominent station in its ranks. In the fourth chapter of this Epistle he had said, "I think that

[2] "Grant that as we are baptized into the death of Thy blessed Son; so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with Him; and through the grave we may pass to our joyful resurrection."

God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

If there be no resurrection of the dead, why do we daily expose ourselves to enmity, violence, and persecution? Why are we content to be in hourly peril of torture and death? "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." By way of confirming the truth here asserted, of the constant dangers to which, by his conspicuous office, he was especially liable, the Apostle strengthens his asseveration by the pledge of that attachment which he felt towards themselves as his children in the faith. I protest the reality of my perils by that honest pride which I feel on your account, as converts to the religion of Jesus Christ, whom I have been instrumental in bringing to the knowledge of His Gospel. In a previous passage of the Epistle, he had called the Corinthians, "the seal of his apostleship in the Lord." In the Second Epistle he says, in just the same spirit, "We are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." And to the same purpose, addressing the Thessalonians, he says, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" As sincerely as I love you, and believe that you recipro-

cate my love, so do I declare the simple truth when I say, I die daily. "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me?" The expression "*after the manner of men*," describes the ignorance and hardihood of those who entertain no prospects beyond the present life. If in a temper of mere recklessness and indifference, I had encountered opposition, and peril, and actual suffering, such gratuitous self-torment would have been utterly unprofitable, and would have deserved only the contemptuous pity of all reasonable men. If you consult our authorized translation, you will perceive that, in agreement with many of our ablest commentators, I have omitted the final words of this sentence,—"*if the dead rise not.*" I prefer to add them to the sentence following, "If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Let us enjoy the brief space of this present life, if there be nothing beyond it. In the apocryphal book of Wisdom, the faithless and the worldly are represented as reasoning thus: "Our life," say they, "is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy; neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave. For our time is a very shadow that passeth away; and after our end there is no returning; for it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again. Come

on, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered; let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness; let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place, for this is our portion, and our lot is this."

Our Apostle assents to the soundness of these inferences, *if there be no resurrection!* "If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." There is an appropriateness in thus joining the two passages together. Were it our fate to be annihilated after our brief sojourn here was over, *present* enjoyment might well be reckoned as the very aim of human existence. Language very like this has been popular, in all ages of the world, with all votaries of self-indulgence. From pagan writers numberless citations to this purpose might be given, and St. Paul's classical education in the schools of Tarsus must have furnished his memory with many such an Epicurean maxim. The passage, however, which he has here given, was more probably derived from Isaiah's prophecies, where, in the 22nd chapter, it is written, "In that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with

sackcloth:—and behold joy and gladness! slaying oxen and killing sheep! eating flesh and drinking wine! let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die."

In the 32nd verse there would seem to be nothing else requiring explanation, except that expression, "I have fought with beasts at Ephesus." Among the savage sports to which the Romans were addicted, and which might almost be termed a national passion among them, were the exhibitions of the amphitheatre. These exhibitions, which were justified on the plea that they tended to make men hardy and fearless, and to familiarize their minds to the sight of peril and agony, consisted sometimes in battles fought with the sword, between men trained in the arts of attack and defence, sometimes in battles between men and wild beasts. During the early centuries of the Christian era, many unhappy converts were thus exposed to the fury of hungry and irritated animals, for the amusement of the Roman populace; and the shout, "to loose the lions upon the Christians," became a common cry, and almost a proverb. Many have supposed that St. Paul referred to this practice of refined barbarism, when he spoke of fighting with beasts at Ephesus. But such an interpretation seems hardly justified by any thing we can learn, either of the Ephesians,

or of St. Paul. Sunk as that city was in sensuality and idolatry, we have no evidence that shows of this kind were held among its inhabitants; and farther, there is nothing beyond this peculiar expression which would authorize us in supposing that St. Paul had ever faced this kind of peril. You will remember that in the enumeration which he gave in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, of the scourgings, and stonings, and shipwrecks, which he had sustained in the course of his Apostolic labours, there is no reference to his having been exposed to an attack of wild beasts, and yet it seems most unlikely that he should have omitted all reference to such an event, had it ever occurred. The history of the Acts of the Apostles carries down St. Paul's biography to a later date than that at which this First Epistle to the Corinthians was written; and we are therefore justified in saying that St. Luke would not have failed to record so interesting and important a fact, had it really *been* a fact. We are driven, therefore, to believe that the expression is here used metaphorically; and we have evidence enough in other writers of the same date, to show that such a metaphor was frequently employed. We cannot identify the particular tumult to which St. Paul here alludes. Many would probably suggest that it must have been that popular out-

break against him, when Demetrius the silversmith, with others of the like occupation, were hardly restrained from acts of insubordination and personal assault, by the expostulations of the town clerk of Ephesus. But we know, that immediately after the Ephesian tumult took place, Paul "called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia," and entered that city no more. So that if the Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus, which appears to be the unanimous opinion of critics and chronologists, it follows, that *in that Epistle* he could not have made any reference to an uproar and an attack which had not *then* taken place. We are, therefore, driven to infer that some unrecorded conflict with his opponents occurred during the three years that he sojourned in Ephesus, sufficiently notorious to have reached the ears of the Christians of Corinth, though it has found no special record in ecclesiastical history.

The arguments attesting the certainty of the doctrine of a bodily resurrection conclude with rehearsing that sensual principle which could hardly be disputed or condemned, if this life terminated man's existence, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But against this alluring inference the Apostle pauses to warn his ill-established converts. In Corinth, the very metropolis

of refined debauchery, need was there that he should do so. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." The tact and ingenuity with which our accomplished Apostle cites to his purpose a popular line of Greek poetry, quoted from the writings of a popular Greek dramatist, deserve our admiration, as denoting the mode in which he employed his literary attainments to the great purposes of his mission, and as illustrating the truth of his own account of himself, "I am made all things to all men, that I might, by all means, save some." Beware, he seems to say, how these carnal and alluring opinions gain any influence over you, and debase your high principles of Christian purity. Suffer not yourselves to be led astray by the godless maxims of those among whom you dwell. Listen, rather, to the warning of your country's poet, who cautions you against the winning contamination of evil example. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Rouse yourselves, as you ought, to a due sense of your spiritual and moral responsibilities, and spurn the carnal delusions which would sink you once more into the slough of heathen vice. Some among you, who call themselves Christians, have yet to learn the very rudiments

of their duty as Christians. "Some have not the knowledge of God." Well may he add, in sorrow rather than in anger, "I speak this to your shame." We never find St. Paul foregoing an opportunity for profitable expostulation or reproof. But his mode of introducing such topics is not that forced and peremptory style which is likely to offend rather than to correct. The topics are introduced so naturally, that the lesson, even though it be a severe one, is administered without personal bitterness; and the inconsistent convert of Corinth, in studying the learned and acute dissertation upon the resurrection, would be startled to a consciousness of his own guilt; and would be the readier to submit to the condemnation of his father in the faith, when he felt that he was self-condemned. This is the secret of effective instruction and rebuke! It is so wise, so positive and intelligible, so full of sympathy for the weakness of the delinquents, so full of affectionate regret for their shortcomings, so free from any thing like a pragmatic assumption of superiority, that it must be a hardened conscience and a hardened heart, which could resist conviction on the one hand, and the pleadings of love on the other! "He that winneth souls is wise," said Solomon. And again, "A word spoken in due season, how *good* is it!"

The greater part of our religious studies on the verses brought before us to-day have been critical and explanatory, rather than practical. And yet, my brethren, what subject can be more directly practical than that of the resurrection of the dead? It is no mere curious inquiry; but each one of *us*, each member of the vast human family, has an individual interest in it. St. Paul solemnly protested to his friends at Corinth, that his life was one of continual danger. To use his own remarkable language, "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." Under a conviction of the precariousness of life, his main consolation was derived from the certainty, that after he had faithfully sustained these trials, there was a crown in store for him, "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him at that day." In other words, the assurance of a resurrection more than compensated for all the troubles, and trials, and perils which it was his daily lot to encounter. It pleases God in these days to try the sincerity of our devotion to Him by a less searching probation; and our anticipations of a resurrection are accordingly less vivid, and less hopeful. He died daily, and consequently thought much of the resurrection which awaited him. We live in comparative ease and security, and consequently we think little about

it. Surely, since our outward circumstances less urgently force upon us the remembrance of our mortality, it were well that in our meditations we made ourselves more familiar with it. Why should we not *die daily*, in our inward convictions, in our religious exercises, and in our fulfilment of duty? Death was, literally, always at hand in St. Paul's case; why should not we think, and speak, and act, as if it were always at hand with us? Would such an impression render us melancholy, unsettled, and incapable of exertion? It produced no such effects upon St. Paul. He did not grow slothful in business, or less fervent in his Lord's service, because he felt how short and uncertain was the time during which he might be permitted to serve that Lord on earth. Whether he had been summoned at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning, he would not have been found sleeping at his post. Would, my brethren, that there were such soberness, and cheerfulness, and energy in us! Would that each day of our lives we could realize to our minds the certainty of death! No one, in sober earnest, doubts that certainty. But, for the most part, we do not like to think about it at all. We do not "die daily," in the most comforting sense of the words. We do not associate, with our knowledge of the frail hold we have of this life, those holy and

blissful visions of a state beyond the grave, which God in mercy has revealed to us, and of which we are assured by the resurrection of our Lord. "If thou wilt be fearless of death," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "endeavour to be in love with the felicities of saints and angels: and be once persuaded to believe, that there is a condition of living better than this; that there are creatures more noble than we are; that above, there is a country better than ours; that the inhabitants know *more*, and know *better*, and are in places of rest and desire. And first learn to value it, and then learn to purchase it; and death cannot be a formidable thing, which lets us into so much joy, and so much felicity. The dead that die in the Lord shall converse with St. Paul and all the College of the Apostles, and all the saints and martyrs, with all the good men whose memory we preserve in honour, with excellent kings and holy bishops, and with the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, Jesus Christ, and with God Himself! For Christ died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we may live together with Him. Then we shall be free from lust and envy, from fear and rage, from covetousness and sorrow, from tears and cowardice:—and these, indeed, properly are the only evils that are contrary to felicity and wisdom. There we shall see strange things, and know new propositions, and

all things in another manner and to higher purposes. There is then no reason but that we should desire death, and account it among the good things of God. St. Paul understood it well, when he desired to be dissolved; he well enough knew his own advantages, and pursued them accordingly. But it is certain, that he that is afraid of death, with a violent and transporting fear, with a fear apt to discompose his duty, or his patience, that man either loves this world too much, or dares not trust God for the next[3]." Can we more appropriately close these meditations than with the prayer of Balaam,—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?"

[3] Taylor's Holy Dying, cap. iii. § 8.

SERMON IV.

---

1 Corinthians xv. 35.

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"

The earlier part of the chapter has consisted of a somewhat severe series of arguments. If we except those sentences in which the Apostle speaks of the termination of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, and which are more immediately addressed to our faith, the rest appeals directly to our reasoning powers. It is demonstrated how the doctrine of a general resurrection is involved in the fact of Christ's resurrection, in the endurance of the martyrs and Apostles, who, through a lively faith in the resurrection, have faced danger and death, in the sacramental ordinance of Christian Baptism, and (more personally) in St. Paul's own daily conflict with persecution. The ques-

tions contained in the text, however, cannot be answered in the same way. They refer to mysteries which must needs be matters of revelation. Human experience cannot elucidate them at all; and therefore whatever knowledge about them is conveyed to our minds, can be conveyed only in the way of simile, illustration, or analogy. And St. Paul treats them accordingly.

The two questions, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" virtually resolve themselves into one and the same. It is not asked, By what process are they raised to life? It would indeed be folly, the most irrational and the most intrusive, to ask that our minds should be informed respecting the mode in which the Most High God shall restore that life which He first imparted. The expression, "How shall the dead be raised up?" does not mean, In what manner is their revival effected? what are those secrets of life and death, by which God imparts sense and feeling to dull and unconscious matter? but the object of the inquirer is defined by the subsequent words, in "what body do they come?" Up to the moment of their dissolution, their bodies were liable to infirmity, and disease, and pain, and decay. Shall they rise from the grave just as they descended into it? Shall the beggar Lazarus rise with all

his sores unhealed, or St. Stephen with all the wounds and bruises of his stoning? A curiosity such as this well merits the reproof with which the Apostle commences his reply; but, in farther enlarging upon the subject, he opens to us views of things natural and things spiritual, which had never been conceived before by the most gifted investigators of the properties of mind and matter. "Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." It is through the process of decay that the seed is made to germinate. The larger portion of the material seed rots in the ground before vegetation emerges above the surface, and long before it is exhibited in the full proportions and beauties of the perfect plant. And who, looking merely at the unpromising case or husk in which the seed is enveloped, would presume, without previous information, to describe the yet undiscovered form and colours of that perfect plant? There is no such direct likeness and correspondence between the seed and its produce, that the shape and properties of the one should suggest those of the other. We do not sow "that body

that shall be, but bare grain." The same kind of grain will spring up in the same mode and kind of vegetation; every seed will produce its own body, for such is God's law. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? There is a divine order in these things which cannot be violated. And so, though a human body be dissolved into its elements in the grave, it shall not thereby lose its identity, though in the resurrection it may revive with higher properties, and more refined capacities.

The question, in what body shall they come, is not indeed answered: how could any reply instruct our minds with respect to a state of being which we have not witnessed or experienced? But we are taught, that, while there shall be a certain relation between the original and the revived body, so as to mark an identity, the peculiarities and attributes and defects of the first shall not be necessarily transmitted to the other, any more than the perfect plant inherits the precise appearances and characteristics of the seed from which it sprang. With regard to God's creative power, each one's own observation must necessarily have established this conviction. It is not limited to one particular type or species. "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and

another of birds." In each of these classes there are distinctive properties, by which they are separated from each other, and at the same time there are certain qualities of which all partake. Can you suppose that in these the resources of omnipotence are exhausted? We have attained to a limited knowledge about these, is there nothing to be known beyond them? If this earth is peopled and beautified by such countless varieties of living creatures, are we to suppose that the other, and as yet unseen, world is not, at least, equally prolific in evidences of His all-producing power? Be assured there may be, and there are, bodies fitted to dwell in heaven, as there are bodies adapted to the circumstances of an earthly existence. "There are also celestial bodies," says the Apostle, "and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." In transferring human beings from one condition to the other, from the earthly to the heavenly, the body suited to the inferior state must undergo some change, before it can be exalted to the superior. Turn your eyes and your contemplations to the firmament overhead. Little as you know of the nature and purposes of the infinitely greater number of those bright orbs, you can, at any rate, detect that some shine with a greater splendour than others, and are distin-

guished by colour, size, brilliancy, and the like. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory." Now take all these illustrative facts together; look to the process of decay and revival in the vegetable kingdom; contrast the dull and unshapely seed with the fair proportions and the gorgeous colouring of the perfect flower; consider the lilies of the field how they grow, till they outshine the costliest robes which the art of man can devise; observe all the varieties of animal life and animal construction, the living creatures with which God has peopled the earth, and the air, and the waters; look to the sky, thickly garnished with cressets of golden fire; admire the variety, and, at the same time, the uniformity of those creative counsels which called them all into being, and rest assured that there is nothing too hard for the Lord and Author of all things. Draw from them that conclusion which Bishop Pearson has expressed in terms so masterly and so eloquent. "The day dies into night, and is buried in darkness and silence; in the next morning it appeareth again and reviveth, opening the grave of darkness, rising from the dead of night: this is a diurnal resurrection. As the day dies into night, so doth the summer into winter. The sap is said

to descend into the root, and there lies buried in the ground. The earth is covered with snow, or crusted with frost, and becomes a general sepulchre. When the spring appeareth, all begin to rise; the plants and flowers peep out of their graves; revive, and grow, and flourish: this is the annual resurrection. The corn by which we live, and for want of which we perish with famine, is, notwithstanding, cast upon the earth and buried in the ground, with a design that it may *corrupt*, and, being corrupted, may revive and multiply: our bodies are fed with this constant experiment, and we continue this present life by a succession of resurrections. Thus all things are repaired by corrupting, are preserved by perishing, and revived by dying. And can we think that man, the lord of all these things, which thus die and revive for *him*, should be detained in death, as never to live again? Is it imaginable that God should thus restore all things *to* man, and not restore man to himself?"

And now take all these verses of St. Paul, which we have been paraphrasing, consecutively, and add the final inference which he draws from the whole. "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption,—it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory,—it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power,—it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

Before commenting upon the marvellous changes here specified, I would direct your attention to a verbal difference, introduced into the Apostles' Creed, as it is generally rehearsed in the daily service of Common Prayer, and as it stands in the Baptismal Service. In the first, it stands, "I believe in the resurrection of the body;" in the second, when addressed to Sponsors in an interrogative form, the question is, "Dost thou believe in the resurrection of the *flesh?*" There is no real difference whatever between the meaning of these two words. In the earliest versions of this Creed, alike the Greek and the Latin, the expression is,

"the resurrection of the *flesh*;" and the reason why the term *flesh* was preferred to the term *body*, was, as Bishop Pearson informs us, simply this, "because St. Paul having spoken of celestial and terrestrial bodies, as well as of a natural and a spiritual body, it was well, in order to avoid any thing like ambiguity, to adopt the word *flesh*, as most distinctly defining that the body intended was the natural or terrestrial body, and not that purified frame to which the soul should afterwards be united, when it shall be admitted to inherit the kingdom of God in the heavens." The resurrection of the *flesh* is, therefore, the more ancient form of the two. This form, as I have said, is still retained in the Baptismal Service. If it be inquired, why a change was made afterwards, and the word *body* was substituted for *flesh?* I conceive that, in process of time, a lower, and more confined, and more metaphorical meaning had, in common talk, become attached to the word flesh; as if it did not include the entire human frame, but only the muscular part, as separate from the bones and sinews; or sometimes as more peculiarly applicable to the appetites and infirmities of corrupt human nature. But in exact grammatical meaning no difference is intended, and the one term is equivalent to the other, and they may be employed convertibly for each other.

And now, to return to the Apostle's account of the change of the terrestrial into the celestial. As I said before, we can only conjecture about that which (in this mortal state) must be a matter of faith, not of actual experience; except only so far as it was illustrated in the case of our Lord's body, previously and subsequently to His resurrection. Now *are* we the sons of God by adoption and by the gifts of the Spirit imparted to our souls, but it doth not appear what we shall be, in our bodies as well as in our souls, when the great change of the resurrection shall be perfected in us. Thus much only are we assured, that we shall be made like Him, created, as it were, afresh in the likeness of Him who redeemed us, who was pleased to die for us as a man might die, and who also rose again for us, as a man shall rise hereafter at the great day of general restoration. So that our nearest approaches to any thing like a true conception of what is meant by a spiritual body must, as I just now said, be derived from the mysterious demeanour and doings of our blessed Lord Himself, during the great forty days which elapsed between the resurrection and the ascension. All that St. Paul says here, intimates a great and lofty change; but the particulars specified are rather negative, than absolutely descriptive. We can appreciate what is meant by the corruption,

dishonour, and weakness of the natural body, but what ideas can we conceive of the incorruption, and glory, and power of the spiritual body? All that degrades us here below, and makes us the objects of loathing to ourselves, shall be abolished. But, vivid and inspiring as is the imagery employed by St. Paul, we cannot attain to any realization of the contrast between the glory of the celestial, and the glory of the terrestrial body. We know what shall *not* find a place in that better land, but the capabilities and enjoyments of the risen and spiritual body, are such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into man's heart to conceive. By the natural or terrestrial body we understand, such a frame of flesh and blood as is suited for purposes of human existence, breathing the atmosphere of earth, and sustained by earthly meats and drinks, and influenced by earthly sensations and appetites. In such a body as this, the immortal spirit which God infused into man, thereby elevating him above the brute creation, may abide during its period of probation. But when this is over, and that spirit is freed from the obstructions of mortality, its former dwelling, the body, shall be cleansed and refined, so as to be no longer subject to the same impulses and cravings; it shall become a spiritual body, not liable to pain and dishonour, disease and death,

not fainting and soon wearied under exertion, or a lack of regular refreshments, not confined and fettered to one particular spot, not a source of suffering, or an incentive to sin. Fancy may luxuriate in visions of a body buoyant, impassive, and beautiful,—empowered to transport itself through infinite space, and, without fatigue, to search into all the wonders of creation. All that we can pronounce for certain is this, that it shall be a meet residence and instrument for the indwelling of an accepted spirit, and shall be no impediment to its loftiest and holiest aspirations. The expressions of the Apostle would lead us also to infer, that there shall not be one uniform measure of perfection, which shall characterize every spiritual body; for as "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, (for one star differeth from another star in glory,) so shall it be in the resurrection of the dead." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." But this radiance, like that of the heavenly bodies themselves, may vary in intensity, from the lowliest disciple accepted within the heavenly mansions, through the brilliancy of angelic and archangelic natures, up to the unapproachable throne of Him who dwelleth in light.

St. Paul, in speaking thus of the characteristics and qualities of the natural and the spiritual body, and of the points of distinction and of similarity which exist between them, would guard himself against being misunderstood, as if he were propounding some new theories devised by himself, or revealing new doctrines which had not been before recognized and declared by God. He repeats, in direct terms, what had been implied in his previous statements, namely, that "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body;" and he goes on to prove these assertions, in the first instance, by a quotation from ancient Scripture, and in the second, by a reference to our blessed Lord's declaration respecting His own nature and powers.

Previously to any further commentary upon this portion of the Apostle's argument, a few remarks seem necessary upon the very peculiar expressions here used by him. I am anxious to avoid, as much as possible, all metaphysical abstruseness; but our attention must be drawn to the distinction here indicated between the words soul and spirit. In ordinary speaking and writing no such distinction is observed. The popular definition of the word "soul" is, "the immaterial and immortal spirit of man." (Vide Johnson's Dictionary.) We speak of "the reasonable soul and human flesh," as constituting "the perfect man."

(Vide Athanasian Creed.) But two quotations from the New Testament will show that we are not at liberty in every case to identify the terms "soul" and "spirit." The first quotation will be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv. 12): "The word of God pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." The second is our Apostle's prayer for his Thessalonian disciples, contained in his first Epistle (v. 23): that their "whole spirit and soul and body should be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." A much larger and more elaborate dissertation than could be here introduced, would be requisite, in order to present any complete view of all the refinements and difficulties involved in the treatment of so profound a subject as this. Suffice it to say, that in a large proportion of his animal endowments, man is a joint sharer with the rest of God's living creatures. Like them he has a body liable to sensations of pleasure and of pain, and capable of voluntary action. Like them he possesses the capacities of memory and of attachment, the instincts of self-preservation, and the like. Now these gifts would seem, for the lack of some more characteristic expression, to be included under the term of a "living soul." But those yet more lofty and undying gifts, which God has imparted to us in common with the angels, the powers of self-

improvement, the promptings of conscience, the knowledge of God, the aspirations after all that is pure, and glorious, and eternal, belong to that third component part of man which the Apostle designates as man's spiritual part.

And now let us return to the passage more immediately before us. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." We have no difficulty in identifying the first passage here quoted, which describes the father of our race. In the second chapter of Genesis, and at the seventh verse, it is written, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This is the natural body, represented in the first Adam. But the second Adam is a quickening, that is, a life-giving, spirit. Mark well our blessed Lord's most significant words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given unto the *Son to have life in himself;* and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." This is the

very type and perfection of the spiritual body, or, in St. Paul's words, this is "the last Adam," the life-giving spirit, who shall also, in the end, "change our vile body, that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." So that, though the Apostle throughout this chapter speaks with a power and distinctness peculiarly his own about the unseen realities of a future state, he is only giving us, under the guidance of inspiration, a fuller development of facts which had been declared before, supplying us with a truthful and authoritative commentary upon the revelations of Moses respecting man's creation, and of Jesus Christ respecting man's destiny in the world to come. And what, my brethren, can be more comforting than these assurances, whether we consider the infirmities and pains of our mortal life, the condition of those who have been removed out of it, or our own ultimate hopes of a blessed reunion and an entrance into the kingdom of the glorified?

In speaking of the infirmities and pains of this mortal life, I would not speak one word which should sound like faithless murmuring. I would not speak of our passage from the cradle to the grave as one dark vale of tears, unmitigated by relief or blessing. Far from it! We are sur-

rounded by beauties, and privileges, and consolations. We see on all hands abundant evidence that our God is indeed a Father of mercies; and our sense of these mercies can hardly fail to convince us that our very trials and disappointments are not dispensed causelessly, but "in very faithfulness;" for "affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." But no humble-minded man, who desires to serve God truly and righteously, and who deplores the thousand impediments which hinder his good intentions, and the host of corrupt passions which debase and contaminate his purest wishes and his best works, will not be ready to confess that, though "they are blessed who hunger and thirst after righteousness," yet more blessed still are the "dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours." Then only shall their spiritual longing after perfection be satisfied, when their Master shall receive them unto Himself. Conscious of his own unprofitableness under the means of grace, and of the numberless opportunities of active service which he has either neglected or misused, the Christian may not unreasonably shrink from anticipating the time when his account shall be closed, and himself called to render it; and in self-misgiving lowliness of mind he may be ready to pray for a

longer sojourn in this world, and for grace to turn that reprieve to good account. But such a prayer is perfectly consistent with an earnest desire "to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better!" The issue is so tremendously momentous, that he hardly dares indulge a wish to hasten it. And so he is content in faith to suffer and to do, till the Lord, who has appointed his earthly task, shall decide that his probation has been sufficiently prolonged. Possibly, too, he may have others dependent upon him, to whose profit and well-being he would still desire to minister; and on their account he suppresses the longing which would otherwise appropriate the Psalmist's prayer, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest." But all this while, what but the hope of that rest encourages him to persevere in meekness and cheerfulness? "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." When shall he enter into it? "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest

expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—to wit—the redemption of our body!"

Need I enlarge farther, though it would indeed be easy to do so, upon the consolations under the trials of this life, which are assured to us by the truths which we have been contemplating to-day? Among those trials there are none so severe, none so frequent, as those which arise from the death of such as we have loved and valued. In their case, to use the Apostle's phrase, the "natural body is sown:" is it no comfort to be assured that from that natural body, as from a decaying and corruptible seed, shall be raised the perfect plant, the body spiritual and incorruptible? I own that these words, descriptive of the alliance and relation and identity between the natural and the spiritual body, do convey to my mind a confirmation of that instinctive hope, that verily in heaven we shall recognize the good whom we have loved upon earth. In the ordinary process of vegetation, we know that to the seed sown "God giveth a body as it hath pleased him, and

to every seed his own body. So also is the resurrection of the dead." There will no doubt be such an imparted glory in the spiritual body, above what belonged to it in its natural state, as can be but feebly imaged in the contrast between the dry seed, and the perfume and beauty, the rich foliage and the bright blossoms which spring from it. Yet surely this imparted glory shall not so change and (not to speak irreverently) disguise the objects of our just attachments upon earth, that, when we meet hereafter, we shall regard them only with that general love which will embrace all the redeemed of the Lord in one blessed communion; but that rather, in our renewed alliance with them, we shall receive a rich overpayment for past disappointment and all the sorrows of separation; nay, that the joy of reunion shall be enhanced by the knowledge that we endured that separation patiently, and in the faithful confidence that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God." Perhaps it may be too much of an earthly notion, but it seems not impossible, that those who have been called to their reward before us may reckon our faithless and murmuring lamentations not only as reproaches against God, who called them out of the world, but as symptoms of unkindness towards themselves, as if we could not sympathize with their

earlier bliss, and would rather retain them to share the troubles and cares to which we are subject, than resign them to the joys of Paradise.

Such a recognition and reunion as I have ventured to infer from the passage under contemplation, though to our natural feelings it would seem to enhance the happiness of heaven, yet ought not to supersede in our minds those loftier hopes of bliss eternal which are revealed to us in God's Word. The imagery which is brought together to illustrate this subject in the Epistle to the Hebrews always strikes me as one of the most elevating passages which were ever penned, even when inspiration guided the writer. "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." Ye are come to this glorious assembly not alone to contemplate their order, and to admire their triumphant happiness, but to share in it, to join their everlasting song of praise, to feel your oneness with them in Christ Jesus, and to know that your warfare is accomplished, and that you can never forfeit your crown. Try to con-

ceive what it must be, to be clothed with a spiritual body. No more hunger and thirst, no more pain and sickness, no more offending members tempting you to transgress; the envious eye, the grasping hand, the taunting lips, the suspicious heart, all gone, all abolished for ever.

Instead of all these heirlooms of corruption, may there not be imparted to us an intellect vigorous and expanding, but simple and lowly as that of childhood, qualified, without overtaxing its powers, to read the mystical volume of God's works and God's counsels, and still approaching nearer and nearer to that infinite source of perfection, whom even the most glorified of His servants cannot fully comprehend, and whose greatness and goodness can be known of Him only, who is in the bosom of the Father? Who can tell the capacities of the spiritual body with which the saints of God shall be raised? We read of our risen Lord, at one while manifested in a form which was not recognized by the Mary who had gone to weep beside His tomb; at another as talking with two of His disciples on their way to Emmaus, unknown by them at the time, but discovered afterwards in the breaking of bread; as standing in the midst, in that closed room where the trembling ten were assembled on the day of the resurrection; as meeting them

mysteriously on the shores of the Galilean Lake, when none durst ask, "Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." There is something awful in these and the like appearances, which do not seem to be subject to, or restrained by, material laws. And if the spiritual bodies of Christ's servants shall in any measure partake of similar perfections, may they not range through universal creation, travelling from star to star, and from system to system, every where beholding and enjoying fresh evidences of infinite mercy and wisdom?

We trust there is nothing blameable in the indulgence of such thoughts as these! May they serve the gracious purposes of stirring us up to a greater zeal for God's honour and service, a more devoted gratitude to our blessed Saviour, and a more humble sense of our own natural weakness. Instead of growing arrogant in our conceit of knowledge, and vainly puffed up by our fleshly mind, may we in all sincerity take up our Apostle's language, and say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

SERMON V.

1 Corinthians xv. 46.

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

Few trains of thought can be more unsettling to the mind, and more unprofitable in directing us to the fulfilment of our regular duties, than the indulgence of conjectures about *what might have been*, if events had been ordered otherwise than it has pleased God to appoint them. In every-day life, how continually are we wearied with complaints of weak people, who, instead of following the plain path of duty which lies before them, are much better pleased to enlarge upon their fancies about the good they might have done, or the happiness they might have enjoyed, if such and such changes had not taken place in their worldly circumstances or their early expectations. If by such discontented dwelling upon our disappoint-

ments and reverses we could undo what has actually taken place, we might to a certain extent be excused for treasuring up and recurring to these dispiriting recollections; but when their effect is, to unfit us for the proper discharge of our obligations to one another and to ourselves, when we fret against the dispensations of Providence which it is not possible for us to modify, when we feed our unhappiness instead of trying to moderate and remedy it, we demonstrate at one and the same time our lack of practical wisdom and of submissive piety, multiplying our distresses and rebelling against the dispensations of the Most High. The same petulant inquiries, into what might have been, too often infect our theological disquisitions. We sometimes weary ourselves and others with asking questions which cannot be answered; and which, if answered, would be profitless. Thus grave triflers have argued about what would have been the condition of the human race in Paradise, if our first parents had never transgressed, and whether, since death was introduced into the world by sin, they would have continued to dwell there in happy obedience until it should have pleased their great Benefactor by some painless process to translate them into a state yet higher and better. Now what end can such inquiries serve? Thus much we *are* concerned to

know, that God designed man, even from the first, for something beyond an earthly inheritance. In his natural body he was framed of the "dust of the ground," and, so far, he was liable to be dissolved into that of which he had been formed. The first Adam was natural, the second Adam was spiritual: and their successive order intimates that the earthy was in its due season to be transmuted into the heavenly. The natural first, and afterward, the spiritual. This the Apostle certifies, because it is a truth bearing upon our condition here in a state of trial, and encouraging us to persevere in well-doing under a lively hope that verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth. But, this truth being established, there is nothing to encourage merely curious speculations. Every one's unhappy experience proves, that man *has* fatally fallen from the condition of perfectness wherein he was created. What would have been his position and his prospects had he not so fallen, it is foolish and useless to ask. It seems almost unnecessary to remind you, that what is said in this chapter, refers exclusively to man's *body*. Of his undying soul, the word of revelation gives us more explicit instruction elsewhere: the great truth established here is the resurrection of the body. The body of the first man Adam was of the earth, earthy: the

body of the second man, even that body in which the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and in which He shall come from thence to judge the world, is heavenly and spiritual in its origin and constitution. The body in which we shall rise again cannot, therefore, be in all respects the same as the human flesh which our Redeemer assumed when He was born into the world, of the substance of the Virgin Mary His mother, which was subject to pain and wounds, to hunger, thirst, and cold, to exhaustion and dissolution; but our body shall be made like that glorified body in which He was manifested to the Apostles during the forty days, to St. Stephen in the hour of martyrdom, to St. Paul on his way to Damascus, to St. John in the Island of Patmos. The terrestrial body *first*, the celestial afterwards. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord *from* heaven," as He shall be revealed at the end of the world. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are (or rather such shall be) they that are heavenly: and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Now in all this St. Paul classes, and, so to speak, identifies all the faithful servants with the Lord Himself. Do we ask what shall become of the ungodly and the sinner? Their doom has been

declared in language of alarming import, but it would be altogether *beside* the Apostle's purpose to speak about it *here*. That there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust, cannot be doubted; and they that shall take their place on the Judge's left hand shall be clothed with imperishable bodies also. How earnestly and how vainly shall they desire at that fearful hour that it might be otherwise, and that all capacity of suffering might be lost in utter annihilation! "Then shall they say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Then shall they desire to die, and death shall flee from them." But the Apostle by his silence in this chapter seems to interdict all enlargement upon such topics, in connexion with those exalted hopes and promises which may well reconcile us to the thoughts of dissolution. Let us return, then, to our own more immediate subject. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Flesh and blood were suited to that state of Paradise, in which man, created after God's image, was placed at first. Flesh and blood are adapted

to that mingled and fallen condition in which man's probation is to be worked out. But they are not adapted to that heavenly inheritance for which he is destined in Jesus Christ, and to which in due season he shall be translated. This human frame contains in itself the very elements of decay, and the instruments of pain. The nervous system which renders us capable of pleasurable sensations is at the same time the cause and vehicle of acute suffering. The providence of God, in endowing us with this delicacy of perception, may render His gift the means of our preservation, by warning us of the approach of what would be dangerous to our well-being and our vitality. An unconsciousness to all these outward and inward impressions might save us a certain measure of bodily uneasiness, but the immunity would be dearly purchased if such insensibility only exposed us to great and fatal danger [1]. Better is it for us that we should be checked in our course by some preliminary sense of distress, than that we should unawares stalk onwards to our destruction. The first ache which intimates the commencement of disease, may urge us at once to seek for an effectual remedy: when mortification has abolished the sense of pain, no remedy can be applied to

[1] Vide Quarterly Review, vol. ciii. No. 205, Art. "Sense of Pain in Men and Animals," pp. 180—218.

any really sanatory purpose. So that pain warns us of insecurity; and, indirectly therefore, is a blessing to us whilst we live in this world; God converting an absolute evil into a providential safeguard. But that which is suitable to an imperfect mode of existence would be out of place in an absolutely perfect state, so that when all danger shall cease, all pain which may awaken us to a state of danger shall cease also. And does not this consideration exalt our sense of Christ's work in redeeming us? Man was formed in God's likeness at the first: but he shall be revived to something higher and more glorious still. For *then* his soul was liable to fall, and his body to be reduced to the dust of which it had been created. But when corruptible flesh and blood shall be refined so as to be beyond the power of corruption, then, and not before, shall he be fitted to inherit God's kingdom of glory. But must this process of refinement necessarily be an offensive and a tedious one? Must it needs be that corruption should do its noisome work by slow degrees, ere mortality shall be swallowed up in life? "Behold, I show you a mystery! we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible *must* put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." The Apostle has arrived at a difficulty, which no arguments from analogy can at all solve or simplify. Previously he could illustrate his declarations by similes taken from the processes of vegetation, and the diversities of animal life, and the varied glories of the lights of the firmament. But nothing which falls within our observation or experience can raise our apprehensions to these deeper secrets of the world to come. "Behold, I show you a mystery." What follows is no subject for argument, but for the reverent acceptance of devout faith. The subject is utterly and confessedly impenetrable and inexplicable. Here he speaks as one having direct and authoritative revelation from the Lord of life and death, and not as propounding conjectures which may or may not be true, and which, according to their greater or less probability, may be either accepted or rejected. It is not spoken "as man's wisdom teacheth, but as the Holy Ghost teacheth," who is the fountain of knowledge and searcheth the deep things of God.

Until the end of all things, generation shall succeed to generation upon the earth. But all this while, the faithful in Christ shall form one society. To that society the living and the dead

shall alike belong. And hence in speaking of this indivisible communion, St. Paul identifies himself with all its members. "*We* shall not all sleep." The Apostle was under no delusion about his own surviving until the corruptible should be totally abolished. He could talk calmly and hopefully of the time of his own departure and his readiness to be offered up. But when he describes the future fortunes of Christ's Church militant upon earth, he sinks his own individuality in the general body of the Saints; and says, "*we* shall not all sleep," intending thereby to assert that there shall be some of his brethren in Christ Jesus, still living as mortal men, at the day when the world shall be dissolved. It is our Apostle's frequent mode of expressing himself when he is referring to great truths, in which the general interests of the Church are involved. So intimate is his sympathy with the faithful of all places and of all ages, that he identifies himself with them. His anticipations far outstretch his own times, and he speaks here, just as he did afterwards to the Thessalonians, "*We* which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep," and *then*, after detailing some of the circumstances which shall mark that final gathering of the elect in the everlasting kingdom, he concludes his description of the con-

summation of their bliss in the very presence of the Redeemer by those remarkable words, "so shall *we* ever be with the Lord." Do not these expressions convey a lesson of Christian love and unity to ourselves, by reminding us that there ought to be no divisions or separate interests in the Church of Christ, and that those still fall far short of the Gospel standard who do not acknowledge and act upon that bond of brotherhood, which constrains all true Christians to say, "*We* are fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God?" I need not detain you with many words about our Apostle's favourite metaphor of sleep, as descriptive of the state of the faithful departed. By it he seems to mark the tranquillity as well as the temporary nature of that repose in which the spirits of those who are earlier called from their earthly trials, are reserved until the great ingathering of the resurrection. The Apostle does not now enter into any statements regarding that intermediate state, though the existence of such a state is in other places more or less distinctly asserted. His main theme is the resurrection of the body, and the doctrine he teaches is—that *all*, the living and the dead alike, *all* shall be *changed* at the resurrection day: not changed in respect to *personality*, for "as *each* man has sowed, even so shall he reap; he that hath

sowed to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting;" the reward of individual self-sacrifice and devotion to Christ and to Christ's brethren shall be assigned to each, according as his work shall have been; not changed into one uniform likeness so as to lose characteristic distinctions, not mingled into one bright and glorious mass, where there shall be little possibility of recognizing the noble army of Martyrs and the heroes of the Church, and, still less, those humbler of our fellow-travellers, who with us have toiled up the steep and narrow way which leads to life. And this wondrous change shall be wrought on the instant. The word which is translated "a moment" literally means a point of time so short that it cannot be divided; and the Apostle farther illustrates the rapidity of the process by a term found only once in the whole of the New Testament, which we render the twinkling or glance of the eye. All shall awake at once, and in all shall the change take place at once, whereby they shall be fitted to enter upon an immortal condition. But there is still another circumstance noted. "The last trumpet shall sound, and then shall the dead be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!" I reminded you when we entered upon this mysterious portion of the chapter, that we must meekly accept such revelations as God granted us by His

Apostle. We must not, by an interpretation perversely literal, lower these sublime expressions to the level of our ordinary experience, nor conceive that the summons to appear before the tribunal of God can be adequately represented by the loud sounds of musical instruments. Among the Jews the trumpet pealed forth its penetrating notes upon the most solemn occasions. The use of trumpets was enjoined by the ordinance of God as a signal for the calling of assemblies and for the journeying of the camps; and when they went forth to war, and in the days of gladness, and in the solemn days, and in the beginnings of the months, and over the burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of the peace-offerings, the trumpets were sounded for a memorial before God (Numbers x.). Among all who were acquainted with the rites of Jewish worship, and with the awful events of Jewish history, the sounding of the trumpet was associated with most sublime recollections, with the giving of the law upon Sinai, with many a stupendous delivery from foes against whom, in their own strength, they could have made but a feeble resistance, with the solemnities of worship alike on days of fast and festival. We are not surprised, therefore, that in the revelations of the Gospel the trumpet should be adopted to figure to our earthly conceptions that all-penetrating sound which shall

notify the day of doom to universal creation. Hence it comes to pass, that, in that wonderful development of the future fortunes of the Church of Christ, which St. John was inspired to declare, seven times is the trumpet tone heard through the depths of heaven, and each blast is followed by events the most momentous. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, some commentators have been disposed to connect that blast of the trumpet here mentioned by St. Paul with that seventh and last sounding of which we read in the 11th chapter of the Revelation, after which "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there

was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." It may be that this seventh trumpet of St. John is to be identified with the last trump of St. Paul, but upon a point so mysterious it would ill beseem us to speak dogmatically. We remember, that, at the giving the law, "the sound of the trumpet exceeding loud" terrified that stiffnecked race as they gathered around the base of Sinai, and impressed them with a salutary fear of offending Him "who bowed the heavens, and came down, and rode upon the cherubim, and did fly; and made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him with dark waters and thick clouds to cover him." In all this, and in the like, there seems to be intimated something too lofty for human conception, something which should repress all attempts at explanation: "the Lord is in heaven, and we are upon the earth," therefore let our words be discreet, and simple, and few. At this trumpet sound "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible *must* put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality." By the very constitution of things, the change here spoken of is unavoidable. It *must* be so. In order that the restored bodies of Christ's servants may be fitted

to dwell in his presence, in order that they may be qualified to take part in the employments of the blessed, and to drink of the river of spiritual pleasures which flows from beneath God's throne, and to join in the triumphant song of the celestial choir, it is needful, not only that the sins which debase human nature should be put away for ever, but that the sluggishness of the human senses, and the obstructions of human flesh, should be purified and exalted, and that we should be "*made* meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Can we suppose that, sudden and entire as the change shall be which thus transforms the carnal into the spiritual, no indications of the commencement of it were to be found in these destined heirs of heaven, while yet they sojourned in this lower world? It could not, indeed, be outwardly manifested in lineament or feature, except so far as a chastened and holy spirit communicates, even to the outer man, a calm and loving demeanour, such as bespeaks the control of Christian principles over sensual passions and worldly covetousness and cunning. Not that such indications can be trusted, as in themselves sufficient to prove that the conscience is at peace with God through Jesus Christ, and the will is devoted to His service, and the heart is replete with benevolence towards mankind, and ever desirous of relieving sorrow and promoting godliness. But the change shall remove those im-

pediments which hindered the growth of godliness in the sincere Christian, impediments which he deeply bewailed, and against which he strove with such powers of resistance as God bestowed upon him, in answer to hearty prayer. That thorn in the flesh (whatever its precise nature might be), that besetting temptation, that constitutional infirmity, that outward vexation which during life was, in his particular case, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, shall then be removed altogether. During St. Paul's earthly sojourn, he "thrice besought the Lord" that a trial of this kind might depart from him. But the prayer was not granted according to the letter. The reply which his Master vouchsafed to him was this: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore," adds the Apostle, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." But though in this conviction he persevered to the end, we may rest assured that, as he bore this cross meekly, so shall his crown be glorious; and the change which his admission into that heavenly inheritance may be presumed to effect, is a change not so much of kind, as of degree. And of a like nature shall be the final change in all God's accepted servants at the last. It shall not transmute the baser metal into the *fine gold of the* sanctuary of God, but it shall

detach the gross from the genuine ore, and convert it into a vessel meet for the Master's use. And to the generous and loving heart what motive for God's service can be presented more noble or influential than this?

I will say no word about the punishments reserved for those selfish and rebellious sinners, who, like the servants in the parable, refuse to have this man to reign over them. They form no part of the Apostle's statements in this chapter, and, on that account, are inappropriate to our present contemplations.

But if there be within us any admiration for virtue, any reverence for wisdom, any ambition for true greatness, any gratitude for proffered loving-kindness, any longing after the society of the blessed, any hope for the pure, and satisfying, and enduring joys of heaven, what can rouse us to put away the evil of our doings, and to acquaint ourselves with our Father's will, and to seek His kingdom and righteousness, if we are insensible to that revelation which assures us, that, as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, and that this corruptible *must* put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality? "Seeing that all these earthly things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy

conversation and godliness, looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?" Flesh and blood may shrink from such lofty aspirations as these from two causes: either because we love the pleasures and goods of this life too devotedly to make the needful effort, or else from genuine and heartfelt humility, which dares not reach after a prize so far beyond our deserts and our hopes. The first of these impediments betokens a kindred disposition with those, "who love darkness better than light, because their deeds are evil;" to whose debased and sensual dispositions the very purity of heavenly bliss must be uncongenial. Why do not such repent and amend? But to the contrite and self-condemned, who ventures not to lift up his eyes to heaven, "but smites upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner," the Gospel of Jesus Christ is specially adapted. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not *see life*; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

SERMON VI.

1 Corinthians xv. 54.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

In the earlier part of this chapter reference is made to the closing events of the Christian dispensation, when our Lord, having subdued all the enemies of His Church, shall resign His mediatorial kingdom into His Father's hands, and God, even the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall be all in all. In that passage, though the triumphant and everlasting glory of Jesus Christ is reverently and somewhat mystically involved, the glory reserved for His faithful and accepted servants is *intimated* rather than directly asserted and described. What was wanting to certify us *of our own* share in that exceeding great reward

is amply supplied in those concluding verses, which so appropriately fall under our contemplation on this our high day of Easter Festival. *Before*, we were told, generally, that the last enemy, which is death, shall be destroyed, and Christ shall reign over us as our Mediator, till He has put all enemies under His feet. *Now*, the particulars of that final victory are more plainly set before us, and we are permitted to know somewhat of the nature of the deliverance wrought for us by our Redeemer, and somewhat also of the nature of that inheritance, to which, as His brethren and God's sons, we may aspire. I do not mean that we have here descriptions and statistics, such as a traveller in foreign lands would endeavour to furnish for the information of his own fellow-countrymen at home. Because, between earth and heaven, between the characteristics of one state of being and the other, there are no such points of similarity as would enable us, by any description, to realize that which is spiritual. Flesh and blood cannot enter into that kingdom; and, until the final change has passed over us, we cannot value aright those good things, "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive." This truth I have more than once insisted upon in the course of expounding this won-

derful chapter, because I fear the substitution, in any degree, of our own imaginations for the pure and authoritative revelations of the Lord. Thus much may we fearlessly assert in the words of the text, that, "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass, the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." The expression here used, to "put on" incorruption and immortality, requires particular notice. Before, the passing from the earthy to the heavenly was termed a change: here, another metaphor is introduced, which would seem to intimate a fresh attire, rather than an actual transmutation. Something like the same form of words is employed by our Apostle in the fifth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. In this human body, which he describes as liable to be dissolved, "we do groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Now these various figures and metaphors, employed to express the same thing, namely, the passing from a state corruptible and mortal to one of incorruption and *immortality,* were probably dictated by the Holy

Spirit, in order to qualify any too literal impressions which might have been deduced from the frequent assertions that we shall be changed. Whatever that change may be, the personality of each individual shall not be lost; but only, as the condition and the functions of each shall be exalted by a nearer approach to the presence and glory of the Supreme, so the body shall have higher qualifications imparted to it, and shall be rendered meet for the indwelling of an accepted soul. And this elevation of the human body from its natural and earthly condition to its spiritual and heavenly, is in one place called a change, and in another a re-clothing; and this additional term would appear (as I said) to have been employed in order to intimate the actual identity of the faithful servant of Christ, in his successive states of temporary *probation* upon this earth, in the first instance; and in the second, of eternal recompense in God's kingdom. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Here, then, we collect the inference from all the foregoing statements and arguments. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;" so said our Apostle at the beginning of this treatise, and here, at its

conclusion, he points out the mode of that destruction. It shall be effected by clothing the redeemed in bodies like His own, indestructible, such as cannot be dissolved. Isaiah, though he probably knew little of the mysterious force of his own words, had prophesied of such a triumph as this. "The Lord will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." As in these words the rescue of the heathen was foreshowed from the darkness of idolatry and ignorance, so in the next following was no less plainly predicted Messiah's conquest over death. "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." The remarkable metaphor here employed, he will "swallow up," seems intended to mark the suddenness of this mighty issue, and answers well to our Apostle's previous words, "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." St. John, in the Revelation, in like manner asserts this final extinction of the last enemy, incorporating Isaiah's words with his own. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death:" or, as it might be still more closely rendered, "there shall be death no more." To the same purpose is *the language* of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Or, again, to quote our Apostle's address to Timothy, where he declares that Jesus Christ hath "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through his gospel." Borne higher and higher by the transcendent greatness of his subject, St. Paul enriches his own strain of triumph by borrowing the eloquence of God's earlier messengers. From Isaiah he turns to Hosea, and adapts, rather than directly quotes, that prophet's joyous anticipations of Israel's deliverance: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." In putting these latter words into the form of a question, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" St. Paul has very closely, though not exactly, followed the Septuagint translation of Hosea. In modifying the language as he has done, possibly the Apostle may have had in his mind that old serpent, the devil, who introduced sin and death into the world, and who, by the Captain of our salvation,

has been, so to speak, despoiled of his sting. In rendering the latter sentence as our translators have done, "O grave, where is thy victory?" a good deal of the force of the original is lost. According to our common acceptation of the words, O death, O grave, are as nearly as possible equivalent expressions; in the Greek there is a very noticeable difference between the two. The word employed for the latter in the Greek is Hades[1], the unseen place, where the souls of the departed rest when their bodies are consigned to corruption; the place which we intend to specify, when in the Creed we say, "that our Lord Jesus Christ descended into hell." Death and Hades are mentioned in connexion with each other in several parts of Scripture. They are found together in this passage of the Epistle to the Corinthians, and in the Septuagint version of the prophet Hosea, whence St. Paul borrows them. Four times they occur in the book of Revelation. In the first chapter, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hades and of death." In the sixth, "I looked, and behold a pale horse: and *his* name that sat on him was *Death*, and *Hades* followed with him." In the 20th, in

[1] Some critics believe that "Hades" ought not to stand in the text; and that "O death" should be repeated.

the vision of the day of final retribution, "The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them." And again, in the verse following, the final abolition of the power of these enemies who shall be put under the feet of Christ is described by the words, "Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." Now in all these instances the word Hades is rendered in our Bible as "Hell." That the place of torment is not intended by the word is evident, since Hades is said to be cast into the lake of fire, that is, into the place of torment. In the highly poetical language of this mysterious book, Death and Hades are both personified, the one riding on the pale horse, and the other following with him. But when the whole counsel of God for man's redemption shall have been accomplished, when the body shall have been restored from corruption, and the soul reunited to it, and the righteous and the wicked shall have received their recompense of reward and punishment, then death shall reign over our race no longer, and the unseen place of departed souls shall be dispeopled; then death and Hades shall be annulled and obliterated, and the final triumph, foreshowed by Isaiah and Hosea, shall be fully accomplished. And here St. Paul's awful declaration of things to come may be said to close. He has admitted

us to some glimpses of the wonders which lie beyond the grave: and here, as was his wont, he adds a few weighty words of practical Christian instruction. Some persons are apt to think that St. Paul deals more in doctrinal than in moral teaching, and that he insists more fully upon the power of faith than upon the duty of obedience. Surely there is no real foundation for any such opinion. The errors of the several churches to which his Epistles are addressed were of a kind which demanded lengthened explanation, and close argument, and it necessarily follows, that a large space is allotted to disquisitions upon the nature of those errors, and their inconsistency with orthodox truth. But where does he omit an opportunity of enforcing a lesson of holiness, or suggesting a timely theme of hope and consolation? And how forcible are these incidental appeals! with what lively application do they arrest our thoughts, and inform our consciences, leading us to a right judgment of ourselves, and of what God requires from us,—not in the form of a wearisome essay upon abstract principles, but with the startling force of an address which seems almost personal, and which leaves us without excuse, if we be self-willed or negligent! With what moving skill does the Apostle turn *from this outburst* of triumphant exultation over

Death and Hades subdued, to warn his Corinthian disciples of the inherited evil, and the recorded curse which rendered Christ's conquest necessary! "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law! but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." But a few sentences back, the blast of his evangelical trumpet was like those penetrating notes with which, at the last day, the Archangel shall wake the dead; while the gentler tones which follow are like the dying sounds which shall gradually sink into undisturbed rest, when the work of judgment is concluded, and the Saints have commenced their everlasting Easter. "The sting of death is sin." Yes, brethren, in death itself there is little alarming or very bitter. The pains of decaying human nature may try our patience and fortitude, but death in that case is rather a friend than a torturer. We may become reconciled to his approach, even though he comes in the midst of youth, or joy, or prosperity, because we know that man is born to trouble, and that he is, therefore, taking us "from the evil to come." It is sin that makes us averse and afraid to die, because we are sure that judgment follows after death, and that "the strength of sin is the law." The known and proclaimed sentence of God against transgression fills us with reasonable alarm. Did

not conscience convict us as offenders, the mere passage out of a world of uncertainty, disappointment, and sorrow, would awaken few complaints or regrets. The inevitable law of God, whether revealed to God's ancient people by Moses, or more fully declared in the covenant of Jesus Christ, or made manifest in the dictates of natural conscience, and, to a certain extent, in the very promptings of instinct; that law, whether written or unwritten, which warns us what to do, and what to leave undone, imparts a pang to death, and haunts us with the alarm of retribution.

And what is there to allay these well-founded apprehensions? What is there which shall make us more than conquerors over all our spiritual foes? What is there which, by reconciling us to God, shall enable us to exalt our heads with joy, when summoned to appear in His presence? "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Yes, my beloved brethren, *giveth us* the victory. It was no wisdom, or virtue, or bravery of our own which subdued these foes under us. The condemnation of sin we may earn by our service of sin; but everlasting life is "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The words in which Israel praised God for past deliverances, and for their prosperous settlement in the land of promise, may well be

adopted in our own case, when we record what Christ has done for us. "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what thou hast done in their time of old; how thou hast driven out the heathen with thy hand, and planted them in: how thou hast destroyed the nations, and cast them out. For they gat not the land in possession through their own sword: neither was it their own arm that helped them. Thou art my King, O God: send help unto Jacob. Through thee will we overthrow our enemies: and in thy Name will we tread them under, that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow: it is not my sword that shall help me; but it is thou that savest us from our enemies, and puttest them to confusion that hate us. We make our boast of God all day long, and will praise thy Name for ever!" And this encouraging assurance, that God has fought for us, and will fight for us, instead of affording a ground for remitting our own exertions, and leaving God to work for us while we stand idly by and await the issue, is pressed upon our consciences as the very incentive to perseverance in well-doing, to Christian soberness and daily self-discipline. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain

not conscience convict us as offenders, the mere passage out of a world of uncertainty, disappointment, and sorrow, would awaken few complaints or regrets. The inevitable law of God, whether revealed to God's ancient people by Moses, or more fully declared in the covenant of Jesus Christ, or made manifest in the dictates of natural conscience, and, to a certain extent, in the very promptings of instinct; that law, whether written or unwritten, which warns us what to do, and what to leave undone, imparts a pang to death, and haunts us with the alarm of retribution.

And what is there to allay these well-founded apprehensions? What is there which shall make us more than conquerors over all our spiritual foes? What is there which, by reconciling us to God, shall enable us to exalt our heads with joy, when summoned to appear in His presence? "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Yes, my beloved brethren, *giveth us* the victory. It was no wisdom, or virtue, or bravery of our own which subdued these foes under us. The condemnation of sin we may earn by our service of sin; but everlasting life is "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The words in which Israel praised God for past deliverances, and for their prosperous *settlement in* the land of promise, may well be

adopted in our own case, when we record what Christ has done for us. "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what thou hast done in their time of old; how thou hast driven out the heathen with thy hand, and planted them in: how thou hast destroyed the nations, and cast them out. For they gat not the land in possession through their own sword: neither was it their own arm that helped them. Thou art my King, O God: send help unto Jacob. Through thee will we overthrow our enemies: and in thy Name will we tread them under, that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow: it is not my sword that shall help me; but it is thou that savest us from our enemies, and puttest them to confusion that hate us. We make our boast of God all day long, and will praise thy Name for ever!" And this encouraging assurance, that God has fought for us, and will fight for us, instead of affording a ground for remitting our own exertions, and leaving God to work for us while we stand idly by and await the issue, is pressed upon our consciences as the very incentive to perseverance in well-doing, to Christian soberness and daily self-discipline. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain

in the Lord." It must be "labour in the Lord" which shall alone be successful; no selfish fancies of our own, not seeking after that which chances to suit our own tastes and inclinations, and shunning whatever is painful or offensive to our feelings; but taking up earnestly and faithfully whatever God appoints to us, either in the way of suffering or of doing; and working on, in dependence upon His blessing, and for *His* glory, not for our own. These are the workmen that shall not be ashamed when the Master comes to reckon with them for their service. They shall assuredly receive their wages; ay, much more than their wages, for what can mortal man earn of God?

"Stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." These are very important words, my brethren! There is no encouragement here to serving God by fits. No grand display of zeal and energy to-day, to be followed by listlessness and indifference to-morrow. No resistance of evil for one season, to be followed by indulgence another. No Lent of mortification and enforced propriety, to be succeeded by an Easter of carelessness, selfishness, worldliness! Surely there is a peculiar force in those concluding words, "knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." How knowing this? Have we not *here* the main axiom to be deduced from all that has preceded?

However the Corinthians might have been previously tempted to forego their Christian efforts, on account of the uncertainty of the issue of those efforts, now, the certainty of a resurrection being established, the disciples can be subject to such temptations no longer. Whilst their false teachers were trying to persuade them that all beyond the grave was doubtful, they might have lent a ready ear to the solicitations of sense, and earthly appetite, and earthly profit. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But now, no apology can be left for such reckless and degraded delusion. Not only has Christ Jesus been set before them as crucified, but as risen again. Their own resurrection is involved in His.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as (whatever may have been your ignorance in time past, now) ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Thus, according to the clear declaration of the Apostle, the great doctrine of Easter, the doctrine of the resurrection, is the source, and sanction, and encouragement for Christian obedience. Have we, my brethren, learned thus to look upon it? Be assured that successive fast and festival are only so far useful towards our spiritual progress as they bring certain cardinal truths more closely

home to our lives and consciences. The fact that we set apart a fixed portion of each year to commemorate the resurrection from the dead of the Founder of our faith, is not alone an usage of decent reverence towards Him whose name we bear, but an occasion for estimating our religious progress, for acquainting ourselves with our real responsibilities, and preparing for that change from the earthly to the spiritual, which, being commenced in our souls during our life below, shall be consummated in body and soul when the Archangel's trumpet shall sound.

Among those who call themselves Christians, there are, I fear, too many who are very far from appreciating this doctrine. They assent to the confession of the immortality of the soul, but that the body should be destined to put on immortality also, seems something hard to be understood, and harder still to be believed and acted on. Yet this is what the words of the Creed intend, when we profess our belief in the resurrection of the body. If this meant only that the soul should survive this life, there would be nothing new, nothing peculiarly Christian in such a discovery. Many a heathen reasoner had inferred thus much, from observing the course of God's providential government of the world. St. Paul's teaching would have *raised* but little surprise or inquiry at Athens, had

he advanced nothing more than this. Yet we read that he was looked upon as a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.

Often has it been asserted, and very truly too, that without the fact of the resurrection, the evidence of our Lord's divine mission, and of the efficacy of His sacrifice, would have been incomplete; and that we might have questioned His power to save us, had there been any failure in that test to which He had frequently appealed, that after three days He would rise again. But may we not say even more than this; namely, that without the assurance of a general resurrection, the whole system of this faith would have been defective? Jesus Christ was perfect man, as well as perfect God. He was born into the world as a man, and endured temptation and suffering as a man, and died as a man. On the testimony of Scripture we are further assured that He rose again from the grave as a man. If He was made like us in all the other accidents of humanity, shall not we be like Him in this crowning event of His earthly career? Even as each of us shall in our turns pay the debt of nature (under which metaphor some persons are pleased to speak of death), so Jesus Christ submitted to death. As He rose again, so also shall we. St. Paul in this

chapter carries us no further than Christ's triumph over the power of the grave, and the pledge therein given us of a like triumph for ourselves. Our Easter commemorations pause here also; the ascension of the risen Lord to His Father's right hand is reserved for another anniversary festival. Surely there is enough in the event of this day to satisfy our curiosity, and to elevate our hopes. Does the change seem distant, and are we weary of waiting for it? Remember that with God a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. The narrowness of our conceptions, and the imperfectness of our faith, cause us to brook delay so impatiently, that Isaiah has written for our consolation and encouragement, "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." Resting in this assurance, let us oppose to the solicitations of sense the confident expectation of this beatific vision. "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty." Thy organs, cleansed and strengthened to bear the manifestations of Deity, shall look upon the very person of thy glorified Saviour; and thou shalt be admitted as a member of that better city, whose foundations are laid in precious jewels, and whose gates are of pearl. Sayest thou that the land is very far off? So *Jacob* thought when he was told of his son

Joseph's honours in the distant land of Egypt; but he had faith enough to commence his journey thither; and when he reached the royal court, and witnessed the glory and greatness to which Joseph was exalted, he thought no more of the weariness and trials of his journey, or of the treasures which he had left behind. To dwell in the presence of God, to dwell in constant communion with our blessed Saviour! Do these prospects awaken a holy joy within us? Nay, rather, do we not shrink under a sense of utter unworthiness? Does not the bare contemplation of them abase us in our own esteem? Sometimes we are taught to be humble by a sensible experience of our infirmities and shortcomings, and sometimes the same lesson is brought home to us by an attempt to form a conception of the society, and occupations, and enjoyments of those blessed ones who serve God in His heavenly temple. The inference is the same in both cases, an entire sinking of self, an abandonment of all conceit of knowledge or goodness on our parts, a prostration of our inmost souls before the unapproachable Majesty of heaven. "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him: and the son of man, that thou so regardest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, to crown him with glory and worship." "Even so, holy Father,

for so it seemed good in thy sight." At the first Thou didst frame him of the dust of the ground, and endow him with the powers of reason and discernment, and infuse into him an undying soul, and enjoin him to love Thee as his infinite benefactor, and to obey Thee as the all-wise and almighty source of being and of happiness. And when, in a temper of envious pride, he set Thy warning at defiance, and yielded to the solicitations of a subtle adversary, Thou didst not abandon him to his wilfulness, but even then didst make provision for his rescue. Generation after generation passed away, and the accomplishment of that rescue was delayed. Prophets and righteous men desired to see that day, and saw it not; and many yielded to unbelief and iniquity, and hope waxed fainter and fainter, till the promise ceased to influence the consciences of men, and they were contented to walk on still in darkness. Nay, when the fulness of the time had arrived, and the God-commissioned Deliverer appeared, they could perceive in Him "no form or comeliness that they should desire him; but he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." And so had it been ordained, that He might be cut off from the land of the living, and, by the sacrifice of Himself, make *atonement* for the sins of the world; "for had

they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." But Thou, O merciful Father, didst accept that bloodshedding, and, looking on Thy Son, didst consent to receive all those who should come to Thee by Him. Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and for His sake didst consent to renew, by Thy Spirit, their souls and bodies, to a meetness for admission into Thy kingdom in heaven. "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart; he that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes, and maketh much of them that fear the Lord." And what is our inference from the whole matter? Can any thing be more comprehensive than our Apostle's own words? "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

And these declarations, which have occupied our Lenten and our Easter contemplations, are continually brought before our minds, under circumstances the most touching, when we consign a

Christian brother or sister to the grave. What can be so comforting to the survivors, what so profitable? "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him." O God, we pray Thee commence in us, by Thy Holy Spirit, that change which may be the pledge and anticipation of the final change, when mortality shall be swallowed up in life. Renew us after the likeness of our Lord in the inner man while we live, and when we die clothe us with spiritual bodies, in which we and all Thy saints may serve Thee throughout eternity.

THE END.

GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS, ST. JOHN'S SQUARE, LONDON.

109

in the Lord." It must be "labour in the Lord" which shall alone be successful; no selfish fancies of our own, not seeking after that which chances to suit our own tastes and inclinations, and shunning whatever is painful or offensive to our feelings; but taking up earnestly and faithfully whatever God appoints to us, either in the way of suffering or of doing; and working on, in dependence upon His blessing, and for *His* glory, not for our own. These are the workmen that shall not be ashamed when the Master comes to reckon with them for their service. They shall assuredly receive their wages; ay, much more than their wages, for what can mortal man earn of God?

"Stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." These are very important words, my brethren! There is no encouragement here to serving God by fits. No grand display of zeal and energy to-day, to be followed by listlessness and indifference to-morrow. No resistance of evil for one season, to be followed by indulgence another. No Lent of mortification and enforced propriety, to be succeeded by an Easter of carelessness, selfishness, worldliness! Surely there is a peculiar force in those concluding words, "knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." How knowing this? Have we not *here* the main *axiom to* be deduced from all that has preceded?